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ENVIRONS OF PARIS.

THE

DEFENCE OF PARIS,

NARRATED AS IT WAS SEEN,

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BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, AND A MAP OF PARIS.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are an account of the Defence of Paris, as it appeared at the time to one who had especial opportunities of observing it in all its aspects.

The author was personally acquainted with most of the political and military leaders on the French side, and enjoyed alone the rare advantage of bearing General Trochu's special pass, and, consequently, the power of free movement within and without the walls during nearly the whole of the siege.

A great part of this narrative has been already published in the *Morning Post*, the rest consists of letters which failed to arrive, but of which the author had kept copies.

Written entirely upon the spot, and under the local influences, it presents a view of the siege from one side only—the inside. The opinions occasionally expressed in it, formed as they were on the moment, and not corrected by the light of subsequent events, are in many

instances too highly coloured by the hope of a better result than was attained. That, however, will not be regarded as a defect, if the work be taken for what it pretends to be—an account of the defence as it appeared to one who, from day to day, reflected its changing aspects in a daily narrative.

One merit this book will have. It is strictly true in all matters of fact. The author desired to see as much of the defence as was possible for any one person, and believes that in this he succeeded. He has recorded but what he has himself seen or known; and in recording it has preferred rather to forego the momentary amusement of his readers than fail in what he held to be his first duty—that of contributing reliable matter to the history of the times.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Siege of Paris derives its great interest, not from the siege, but from Paris. It is not that a city has been invested, defended, and finally taken, but that such a fate should have befallen a city in the peculiar and unique situation of the French capital. The mere material features of such a phenomenon would alone have made it most startling. The size of the city, with two millions of inhabitants, an inner line of ramparts some thirty miles, and an outer circle of detached forts of fifty miles in length, rendered the undertaking to isolate it, and to keep it isolated, unprecedentedly difficult, and, as many thought, impossible to carry out. But that the great centre of civilised life and intellectual activity, the acknowledged arbitress for the whole world in all matters beyond and above the mere scaffolding of society, should have been suddenly cut off from all external communication, surrounded by an iron circle, and compelled for five long months to live by itself, and

upon itself—this, above all, it is that makes the siege of Paris a landmark in the history of the world.

That the city should have been, for upwards of four months, defended as it was, is even more remarkable than that it should have been besieged as it was. There never was a population less likely to affront hardship and privation, and less fitted to endure them, than the Parisians. The richer of them are utterly selfish, caring only for personal display and sensual enjoyment; the poor, filled with communistic notions by the writers who undertake their political "exploitation," and owning no all-controlling influence save that of mere force, are jealous of and filled with hatred towards all that are less poor than they; while the middling classes, exclusively devoted to the making of money, are only anxious to be secured in the keeping of that which they have already made. The Parisians believe in nothing and respect nothing. At the most they doubt and fear, and only that when doubts and fears are impressed upon them by physical strength. It is strange that such a society should hold together at any time, but stranger still that it should have held together through the hardships of a siege, and should to the end have presented so unbroken a front to the besieger.

Nor would it have done so but for the intense vanity with which the Parisians regard themselves. "Paris is

France" is a phrase which has been so often repeated by them that they have at last as nearly believed it as they can believe anything. In order to glorify their city, they were ready to endure sacrifices and to make efforts to which no other object could have reconciled them. And yet even then they continued to shift the main burden of the defence from off their own shoulders. They accepted the absence of news and the suppression of amusement without a murmur, ate their diminished food cheerfully, and endured even the bombardment not only without flinching, but with gaiety. Their passive attitude was excellent, but they did little or none of the active work of the defence. Paris was defended, not by Parisians, but by the provinces; not by the National Guard of the city, which only took part in one serious engagement, but by the sailors, the regular troops, and the country Gardes Mobiles, who for five months were camped outside the walls, between the city and the Prussians.

To deal successfully with such materials required leaders of great political ability and military genius. Unfortunately, neither were forthcoming. The men who blundered into power on the 4th September had lived up to that time a life of helpless and hopeless opposition; and when they found themselves, to their own astonishment, in the position of a responsible Government, they

were discovered to be mere political children. General Trochu had shown that he possessed the ability of a military student, but it soon became apparent that he was devoid of the genius required to control and to devise issue from a novel situation. There was undoubtedly among the defenders of Paris a great amount of individual courage and self-devotion, but for want of adequate direction and organisation they were allowed to evaporate in admirable acts, instead of being made to produce profitable results. From beginning to end the defence was a tangle and a confusion, and thus was produced the strange phenomenon which Paris presented of great sufferings patiently endured, and small sacrifices impatiently resented; of mingled heroism and cowardice; of alternate intelligence and incredible blundering, which are found inextricably mingled throughout its history.

A FUGITIVE FROM SEDAN.

THE DEFENCE OF PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST ASPECT OF PARIS.

PARIS, *Thursday, Sept.* 8, 1870.

ON Tuesday morning, the 6th September, I was comfortably sailing up the smooth Southampton Water in the most charming of yachts. We had been a cruise to the westward, fishing about the Cornwall coast, living a delicious lazy life between sea and sky, with a maximum of sun and a minimum of clothes. At Southampton I went ashore and got the newspapers, being eager for news from France.

The Emperor surrendered! A Republic established! It took my breath away. A great impatience at once filled me. All my pleasant dreams of another lazy cruise vanished. Should a Republic be established, should Paris be besieged, and I not there? Impossible. I must go. Go I accordingly did by the very next train to London, just managed to get a passport and a *visé* by special favour, put ten pounds in my pocket, and took the night mail to Paris. I saw three or four people in town, who declared that I must be mad, and predicted horrors of all kinds. I have always found, however, that horrors grow much less horrible the nearer you get to them. I left London

somewhat depressed, I confess. At Dover my spirits were still rather low, and did not improve when I found that there were only some ten passengers across. At Calais, however, I felt decidedly better, though there I met several English fugitives, and learnt that the Prussians were certainly on the line of rail. At Creil the bright sunrise showed me the railway station barricaded, and a line of palisades across the rails with just space enough for the train to pass. Men in blouses were putting the finishing-touch to the defences, and at a little cottage by the road-side a peasant was engaged with the whole of his family in furbishing up the most dangerous-looking fowling-piece ever made to sell. A feeble and futile defence, indeed, but it did one good to see the spirit of the people. A thrill of enthusiasm ran through the train. "Pas un de ces gredins ne reverra la Prusse," said an officer, sitting next me, with whom, for the moment, I agreed, and I believe if the enemy had arrived then, we should all have got out of the train and done something wild, even if it had only been to throw our carpet-bags at him.

Paris I find bears much the same appearance as ever, except that there are no eagles, no sergents-de-ville, and very few smart people to be seen. I know a considerable number of people here; but I find that they have one and all fled. It matters little, for nobody thinks of asking one to dinner in these times. Lodging is naturally extraordinarily cheap. I have got a splendid suite of apartments over Giroux's shop, some ten white-and-gold rooms, with a long range of balcony looking on the boulevard, for *six francs a-day!* I believe I could have got them for nothing, on the mere strength of being an Englishman, and therefore inviolable. That detestable caravansera, the Grand Hotel, is, I am happy to

say, deserted. I dined there last night just to see, and there were only six people at the *table d'hote*. The Prussians, it is said, have announced that they will respect it as neutral territory. Probably they have got shares in the company.

With all this I find it next to impossible to persuade myself that I am in a beleaguered city, and under martial law. There are no swaggering sergents-de-ville about, and therefore no disturbances; even the *cochers* are civil. Last night the theatres were all closed for the first time, but the boulevards were as crowded and as cheerful as ever. The great feature is the enormous number of disbanded soldiers—fugitives from the army of Sedan, most of them—who are wandering about the streets, apparently without any aim or object, and without any attempt being made to bring them again under organisation. Every few steps one comes across soldiers, singly, or in twos and threes, of all arms and all dresses, ruddy, healthy, well-fed, apparently, but with torn uniforms, hung about with arms and accoutrements in the strangest disorder, covered with mud to the knees, and looking so dejected it is piteous to see them. Before many of the *cafés* may be seen Turcos and other soldiers being treated to beer and made to recount their adventures. They are generally, I find—for I have "interviewed" several heroes — of a monotonous kind. The French soldier mutters "treachery," and curses the Emperor. The Turco commonly says—"Mafiche—je guerrie—tué un, deux, dix des Prussiens—veux battre encore," and so forth. The Frenchman is depressed; the African generally radiant, for he neither seems to know nor to care what he has been or is likely to be fighting about, or how the fortune of the war is going. Along the boulevards, pushing in and out of the crowd, are *gamins* selling a gross caricature of the Emperor,

"Demandez Badinguet—la plus grande canaille qu'on ait jamais vue," being their cry; at which all the loungers laugh heartily, for a fallen man need not look for mercy at the hands of Parisians.

This morning a bright sun is shining, and the streets again are full of people, who go about their business quite as usual, or perhaps stand languidly looking at the decree of the Provisional Government which dissolves the corps of sergents-de-ville, and establishes a new and unarmed force of "guardians of the public peace." They are right to take matters in this way, or rather they cannot help themselves, for those who are left in Paris are all people who have got work to do. All that calls itself society has fled long ago—left its houses in the charge of the concierge, and apparently has taken away its horses and carriages to more peaceful climes, for there is scarcely a private equipage to be seen, and those that do appear are laden with household goods and luggage. The result is that those who have visited or lived in Paris for pleasure's sake find themselves rather lonely, and Englishmen are likely to be worse off than ever soon, for I hear that our Embassy thinks of taking itself off altogether. They are of little use here as it is, for they hold no communication with the Provisional Government, and if a British subject gets into difficulty they can do nothing for him, because, like the man who passively saw another drown, they "haven't been introduced to them." Paris without theatres, society, or "bouches inutiles" would run a risk of being considered duller than even London is at this time of year.

The Provisional Government gains. The chief towns of France have given in their adhesion to the new order of things. There is no sign of reaction, and among the extreme men a cry is already arising that

the Government is too lenient to those who have been at all identified with the Imperial *régime*. The *Marseillaise*, which reappeared this morning, demands "Pour les ennemis du dedans la terreur," and this cry is liable to be taken up at any moment by the ferocious Parisians, especially when they begin to feel the effects of having a Prussian army round Paris. There are many who declare that we shall have another series of September massacres like those of '92; but I think that fear alone prompts the prediction, for there is nothing to provoke a rising of *sans culottes*. They may, and very likely will, seize the handsome houses of the Bonapartists and turn them into hospitals, as the Government has already done with the Tuileries, over which the red cross now replaces the tricolour; but I do not at all believe in massacres, and I do believe in Trochu, who will restrain the ruffianism of the city with a strong hand. The Republic has a better chance of standing now than it ever had before, but the great danger of the Provisional Government is—peace. All the best men desire it ardently; they feel that there is no possible thing to be gained by continuing the war, but they dare not tell the French that they must submit to humiliation. Yet I am told that peace is, after all, now little more than a question of money; that the Provisional Government is prepared to give one hundred and sixty millions sterling of indemnity, while the Prussians ask for double that amount. The *Journal Officiel* publishes this morning a despatch from the American Minister, recognising the Provisional Government, and offering felicitation upon its establishment.

The whole of the private correspondence of the Imperial family has been seized and will be published.

I am told this morning that the Prussians are already at Meaux, less than thirty miles distant. The preparations

for the defence are being taken, however, very energetically, but yet without any sufficient system, every man appearing to do to a large extent that which is right in his own eyes. I was awoke this morning by the drums and clarions of a large body of the Garde Mobile, in blue blouses and canvas trousers, on their way to Meaux, between which place and Paris the first conflict may be expected. In the night there arrived a strong force of Marine Artillery, all of whom have been thrown into the detached forts, which are now ready to hold out any time. Below ground the approaches to the city are mined, and above there are balloons ready to be sent up to watch the Prussians as soon as they arrive. As for provisions, we are very well off; but in any case it would be difficult to starve us; the city is probably too large to be completely invested, and I was told mysteriously yesterday that there are means of communicating with the country of which the Prussians little dream.

Friday, Sept. 9.

Through the courtesy of a member of the Provisional Government I was yesterday favoured with a "laisser-passer," the power of which I at once proceeded to test by driving straight off to that part of the fortifications which I have best known in more quiet times. In the Champs Élysées there were still a few people lounging on chairs, probably more from habit than anything else, for there was scarcely an equipage to be seen of all that generally made that spot a terror for the pedestrian. All round the Arc de Triomphe I found the soldiers of General Vinoy encamped, some sleeping in the *tentes d'abri*, others making soup, and others, again, polishing up their arms—a picturesque scene. Just beyond, in the ride that runs down the Avenue de l'Impératrice, a battery of artillery had picketed their horses, whose wretched condition showed

the hard service they had seen. Here and there down the avenue were squads of the Garde Mobile drilling, groups of soldiers in twos and threes looking on interestedly, or sauntering about. The end of the avenue, however, was completely deserted, and across the road at the point where we have been accustomed to be received as it were in the Bois by Gardes de Paris, there rose a rampart of earth some 30 feet high, pierced by two drawbridges of the rudest construction. Four or five Gardes Nationales were there, one on sentry, assisted apparently by a sergent-de-ville in undress—the first I have seen. "On ne passe pas," came spontaneously from their lips. On my showing my card to the sergent-de-ville he merely turned it over and eyed me voraciously. I suspect he could not read; but the National Guard came to my rescue, and pointed out sapiently enough that I was "engaged in the national defence."

Upon this I was allowed to pass the bridge. Alas! I did not know myself. As for the Bois, it had disappeared for at least a hundred yards. In front of me two rows of strong palisades rose upon high mounds of freshly-turned earth, through which the only opening was by a zig-zag sunken way. On either side ran the ditch, and behind that the rampart, newly pierced with embrasures, through which there looked down upon me some very ugly cannon mouths. There will be a very warm reception for any Prussians who may attempt to enter Paris from the western side. On returning across the drawbridge I was walking through the Garde Nationale, when my hand was suddenly seized, and I found myself talking to one of my smartest Parisian friends, a *petit crevé*, who had donned the blue uniform like everybody else. He was delighted to see me; "we should amuse ourselves *crânement*;" and if there was a sortie he promised

that I should be "of it." This gentleman was on guard on Sunday last at or near the Tuileries, and he showed me a little toy soldier and a written exercise belonging to the Prince Imperial which he had picked up in the palace. The soldier was perfect, but the exercise, which was in French, was indifferently done, and full of the tutor's corrections. "Poor boy," said my friend, "I hope he is safe in England."

Returning along the Champs Elysées, I saw a great crowd in the middle of the road, and had, as I was told, "the good luck" to come up in time to see two supposed spies arrested and bundled into a *fiacre*. To my eye, they looked very like French gentlemen of the ordinary type, but the crowd "knew that they were Prussians," and some 500 citizens formed themselves into a guard round the carriage and escorted it off to the Mairie in a serious way, but with perfect order, and without any attempt at violence. A little farther on I saw precisely the same scene re-enacted, except that this time it was only a single man taken, who, unlike the other two, seemed very frightened at his position. The spy mania is worse than ever, and is used freely by those who have a grudge. Last night I was sitting at a *café*, and a beggar boy, whose solicitations I had disregarded, suddenly raised the cry, "C'est un Prussien! c'est un Prussien!" Upon my rising to give him a thrashing with my stick, however, he bolted, and I was left in peace, but the incident shows how easy it is to be made an object of suspicion.

This morning there is posted all over the town a notice signed by M. de Kératry, the Prefect of Police, warning all those who wish to leave Paris that they must take themselves off at once, and recommending them to ascertain at the railway stations by what trains they can be carried.

Encouraging, is it not? Also, by way of finally clearing the decks for action, an order has been issued by General Trochu to all the inhabitants of the "military zone" round the capital to quit their houses. Most of them have already done so, and a considerable number of the houses themselves have been, and are being, razed to the ground, so as to leave room for the play of the artillery. Eight houses and a factory were burnt yesterday afternoon at Bicêtre, as the most expeditious way of getting rid of them. As for provisions, the Government assures us that we have enough to feed two millions of people for two months.

A large body of Gardes Mobiles arrived yesterday from the provinces, and for an hour at least were marching along the Boulevards. Those I saw were from Picardy and Brittany, splendid fellows, broad-shouldered giants, such as one seldom sees in any country, and the most remarkable contrast to the miserable, puny little wretches who form the bulk of the regular army. Their broad faces wore a touching expression of simplicity and gentleness. Poor fellows! they had been rudely snatched from their quiet homes, and most of them seem quite dazed at being thus launched into the heart of a great city. Of the Bretons there was scarcely one in fifty that could speak French, and they could probably not understand a word of the enthusiastic cries with which the crowd met them. But they knew they were come to fight for their country, and as they swung along at a killing pace of five miles an hour they hastily snatched at the proffered hands and joined in the cries of "Vive la République!" One simple-minded fellow, backward in his news, shouted, "Vive l'Empereur!" but nobody paid any attention to it. As for the on-lookers, they went wild with delight, and quite plucked up courage. "Il y a encore de

l'espoir," was an expression repeated every instant; then you were admiringly bidden to look at them, "Voilà des gaillards, aha! les Prussiens veulent entrer à Paris, nous les écraserons, il n'en sortira pas un—pas un monsieur." Enthusiasm is catching, and seeing those grey-bloused giants, I went back to my coffee in better spirits. Unhappily, it is arms and ammunition, not men, that are wanted. These peasants had nothing but an old-pattern muzzle-loading rifle, and as to drill they can have scarcely any at all. They will do good service in the forts, but brave as they may be, they are not the troops to stop an army of highly-trained and perfectly-armed soldiers. Some 30,000 of these Gardes Mobiles arrived yesterday, and they have been quartered upon the inhabitants all over the town. No less than fifty were sent to the house —a large one—in which I am lodged, and I was near having to give up to them some of my rooms. The proprietor of the house, however, bought himself off the greater number, and lodged a dozen in the servants' rooms. They have been cleaning their arms since five o'clock this morning in the courtyard, but they have all gone now.

Notwithstanding the rumour of yesterday that the Prussians were at Meaux, I am assured this morning that they are still no nearer than Château-Thierry, and are delayed by Laon, which, from its natural advantages, is expected to prove a tough nut for them to crack. I had ordered a horse for this morning, intending to ride out towards Meaux, to see if anything was going on, but on hearing this I gave up the project, not at all sorry to do so either, for it has been raining in torrents since daybreak. The words "peace" and "negotiations" are now in everybody's mouth, and there are all kinds of rumours afloat as to action having been taken by

the neutral Powers. My first impression of the Parisians is confirmed more and more. I believe that they will fight, and fight well; but unless a providential supply of arms and ammunition turns up, I doubt their being able to hold out against the attack, which it is to be presumed the Prussians will at once make, more than a few days. The Provisional Government will, however, find it almost impossible to propose or to accept any terms of peace that will satisfy Prussia, but it will be able to dare more in that way than any other possible Government at this moment. It is quite a novel thing in France to find all men and all parties so unanimous as they now are in supporting the existing authorities, and to hear such universal confidence expressed in them. A general election is to take place on the 16th October.

CHAPTER II.

ARREST.

—o—

Sept. 10.

I HAVE just had the compliment paid me of being arrested as an Uhlan, and perhaps an account of my adventure may not be uninteresting, all the more so as I have been enabled through it to examine at my ease the fortifications and forts on the north-eastern side of Paris. I wished to see for myself the aspect of the country on the threatened side of the capital, to learn, if possible, something of our friends the Prussians, and to see what preparations have been made to receive them; so this morning, at seven o'clock, I started for a ride in the direction whence they are expected. Our Gardes Mobiles (we lodged thirty-one of them last night) had already left the house, and all the military element appeared to be already afoot. All round the Madeleine were Gardes Mobiles and Nationales drilling for their lives, and on every side were to be heard the drums and trumpets without which no French troops ever stir. As I drew to the eastern or poorer quarters of the town the movement appeared to be still greater, and I thought the aspect of the people more serious—more like that of men grimly determined to defend their homes. Yet their homes are really hardly worth defence. Those who admire the superb avenues and lofty palaces of Paris, and hold them up as an example for London, have probably no more

idea of such quarters as Belleville and St. Antoine than they have of Whitechapel and Wapping. Mean, tumble-down houses, tortuous and unswept streets, broken every ten yards into holes, and a wretched population of starved beggars, is what they would find there. Misery has its home in every capital, but the misery here appears all the more striking from the great contrast that immense wealth opposes to it. The Revolution has stirred up in them some spirit, however; a spirit which just now is turned into a legitimate channel for the defence of the country, but which may some day overflow and run in strange and dangerous courses. Groups of low-browed, unshaven men hang about, in whom it was easy to recognise the most dangerous of the dangerous classes. They had no uniform and no arms, and looked as if they knew their time had not yet come, but that it was near. Twice in the open spaces I passed trees of liberty—wretched consumptive poplars, palpably unable to bear their rude transplantation, their melancholy drooping boughs decked with flags and ribbons, their summits crowned with the *bonnet rouge*, and at their foot a grim, slouching Garde Nationale standing as sentry, and a group of idlers even more grim and slouching looking on—altogether not a bad emblem, I thought, of the state of affairs internally.

At the Porte de Romainville, by which I went out of the city, I found a good deal of animation, caused by the influx of a long pile of waggons carrying hay and straw. The sentry did not challenge me, and I rode quietly out over the drawbridge and through the palisades which have, as on the western side, been erected as an outer line of defence before the gate. Beyond the palisades all the houses have been cleared away for some 200 yards from the walls, and heaps of white ruins alone mark the spot where they stood. Beyond this space, however, the

suburb of Romainville itself stands intact so far as the houses are concerned. But it is entirely deserted, every house shut up, and not a soul to be seen in the narrow streets but soldiers and melancholy peasants bringing in their families and household goods in carts. The other side of the town I came upon the open country, and pressed my horse into a canter—a wretched brute, whose only sign of animation consisted of vain attempts to walk upon his two hind legs alone. I passed thus the fort of Romainville, then the fort of Noisy, beyond which several parties of soldiers were engaged in throwing up earth-works, and in completing other defences of a nature which I will not reveal, lest they should fail in their object of astonishing the Prussians. The trees by the side of the road were all cut down, and some of them laid across it as *abattis*. On the road itself not a creature was to be seen save the occasional peasant with his cart and family flying to the walls for safety; but during the whole of my ride I saw not a human being leaving Paris, with one exception presently to be mentioned. On either side of me lay the market gardens, full of herbs and vegetables, and very far from looking like the "desert" that was to be made up to the walls of the capital. Possibly the fruits of the earth are left for the French as well as for the Prussians, for I saw two soldiers busily engaged in pulling up potatoes—of course with the full consent of the proprietor.

The road runs here upon the ridge of a hill. Below me on my left, as far as the eye could reach, there stretched a smiling valley, dotted with towns and villages, whose white houses glittered like jewels in the morning sun, while in the distance the forest of Bondy lay upon the hills like a soft garment. My view of the scene was not altogether artistic, for a mile or two below I saw a town which I supposed must be Noisy-le-Sec, where I proposed

to breakfast. Meeting now a peasant in the eternal blue blouse, I asked him the question, and as he was answering a dragoon galloped up from behind, and stayed, apparently, to listen to our colloquy. The peasant at once became suspicious, changed his tone, laid hold of my bridle, and asked "Whence I came like that?" I, of course, told him that I came from Paris, and as neither the dragoon nor he still showed signs of leaving me, I produced the card on which is written the order of the Provisional Government bidding everybody to let "the Citizen Bowles" pass freely. Hitherto this card had acted as if by magic, but although the dragoon scratched his head at it, the peasant was far too clever to be taken in. "You are English, you say. Well, as for me, I don't know whether you are English or Uhlan." Hereupon the dragoon found speech and said they must arrest me; a course to which, seeing there was nothing else to do, I agreed cheerfully. They did not quite know, however, what to do with me, but as during the conversation I had caught sight over the hill of something that looked like ramparts, I asked if that was not a fort, and being told that it was I suggested that we should all go thither, for it occurred to me that it would be a capital opportunity to make the internal acquaintance of one of these much relied-upon works. No sooner said than agreed to, especially by the dragoon, who seemed to think it would be a bore to ride back to Paris with me, though he had already made his preparations so far as to produce a large pistol.

Over the drawbridge into the fort of Rosny accordingly we went, and came at once upon a crowd of sailors. An officer having been called, he at once turned out the guard, and sent to inform the commandant of the important fact that a Uhlan had been captured. This I found was the universal decision as to me, and as I waited

patiently I heard all the evidence summed up in a most damning manner against me by the tars and the peasant—"It is evident. Look, he has a fair moustache and boots. Then look at the horse. It ought to gallop well, and they are all well mounted, the Uhlans." At this moment there came up a frank and amiable-looking old gentleman, in a naval uniform, who I concluded was the commandant, and to him I once more produced my pass, and this time my passport with it. He was isolated, he said, but he had just received a telegram from Noisy, which he showed me—"Arrêtez un cavalier en bottes vernies—On court après." Under these circumstances he must telegraph to Paris; would I have the kindness to remain? With this he left me in charge of an officer, to whom I promptly suggested that it would be very amiable if they could give me some breakfast. He seemed to think this cool, but left me, apparently to consult either the cook or the commandant, or perhaps both. Meantime I lit a cigarette, and observed that the interior of the fort was very like the interior of every other fort I have seen, and that it appeared to be manned entirely by sailors, who were moving great guns about, and cheerily digging holes in the ground, with that hearty goodwill with which sailors seem to be alone endowed. The guns already mounted were mostly small, but there were a few monsters among them. In a few minutes more I was ushered into the commandant's room, and found him charming. Arrests, he said, could not be helped in these times. Only yesterday two officers in uniform had been brought to him, one of them for the third time; but he must ask me to wait for the present, and meantime he had ordered some breakfast for me. The breakfast was shortly afterwards brought in by a soft-footed, light-handed sailor, and while I was eating it the commandant left the room. Shortly after-

wards a sous-officier came and asked for him, and upon my explaining that he was gone for the moment, said, "Perhaps you, sir, will sign these papers for me." "Certainly," I replied, "if you wish it, only I don't "think it would be of much use, as I am a prisoner." This so frightened the man that he bolted like a flash of lightning, and shortly after the commandant came in with an answer to his despatch, ordering him to let me go. Accordingly off I went, found my horse (tied up with a "clove-hitch"), shook hands with the commandant, and left him. His name is Capitaine de Vaisseau Mallet, and if ever it is his evil fate to be taken prisoner I hope he will be as hospitably treated as he treated me.

I thought I might as well take another road back, and so passed through Montreuil—whose famous peaches are hanging on miles of white walls—and so on to the Bois de Vincennes. The road was one long string of peasants' carts, but the wood itself has not been touched, and looks as fresh and well-kept as ever, save that there are several regiments encamped under the trees. Had I been a Uhlan I could have got into Paris without any difficulty, for I was not challenged at the gate, which exactly resembles all the rest, as do also the arrangements for defence. One feature of the gates is that the octroi stations are deserted, and that all provisions, and, in fact, everything else, are allowed free entry without tax of any kind.

The Prussians are reported at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, close to Meaux, and thirty-three miles only from Paris. One result of their approach is that, by a decree published this morning, all private telegraphic communication has been suspended in the department of the Seine. The railway bridge at L'Isle, this side of Meaux, was blown up yesterday. Meantime the Provisional Government continues to inspire confidence—sufficient confidence, at

any rate, for the moment—and both they and the French people are encouraged by the recognition which Italy, Spain, and Switzerland have extended to the Republic. The funds have gone up upon this, which seems almost absurd, with the Prussians steadily advancing; but although everybody talks of their advance, nobody seems really to care much about it. I am getting rather disgusted with the nightly exhibitions of levity and carelessness on the boulevards. Coffee, cigars, idle gossip, and *bouches inutiles* are scarcely the right elements of occupation with an enemy so near. Those who are really doing the national work, however, appear now to be in earnest. Enormous efforts are being made in every direction, and those who seriously occupy their thoughts with the affairs of the country are thinking less of Paris being preserved by a hastily-made peace and more of its defence by arms. There is still, however, in diplomatic circles a hope that matters may be arranged before the Prussians can arrive; and as their plan appears to be to bring all their armies down on Paris before striking, time may yet be left for negotiations. In order to prepare for the worst, however, the Court of Cassation is to be removed to Tours, and it is announced that M. Jules Favre, the Foreign Minister, will also retire thither; in which case he will be followed by the whole *corps diplomatique*, who, it appears, have determined to remain in Paris so long as the department of Foreign Affairs is here.

Sunday, Sept. 11.

If Paris fails to defend itself it will not be for want of preparations. These have been pushed on with the greatest energy by the Government, and a wonderful change in the aspect of things has been effected during the last four days. The disbanded soldiers who wandered

about the streets have all disappeared, having been gathered up and drafted off into the forces appointed to defend the capital. An enormous number of fresh troops—marine artillery, line regiments, Zouaves, Turcos, and Gardes Mobiles—have arrived, and all of them have already settled down to their different posts. Altogether there are 100,000 regular troops and 300,000 Gardes Nationales and Gardes Mobiles in and about the city. What is more important is that considerable supplies of arms and ammunition have been obtained, while thousands of chassepots and cartridges are being turned out daily, all those who are capable of making them having been made to abandon all other work for this alone. So much more plentiful have arms become that a portion of the Garde Mobile have already been provided with chassepots in exchange for their muzzle-loaders. A number of gun-boats of splendid construction, each carrying one heavy gun and two mitrailleuses, and drawing no more than three feet of water, have been hastily brought in pieces by railway from the naval ports, and most of them have already been put together and are actually on the waters of the Seine and the Marne; a formidable flotilla, which will do good service if the Prussians continue their advance on the present line.

The railway tunnel of Nanteuil was blown in, and the bridges of Cornillon (close to Meaux) and Tulfort blown up yesterday, and the same measure will be applied at every point of the Prussian line of march, of which the Government has full and constant information. This morning we are prepared by an announcement, signed by General Trochu, for what will be a still more desperate and lamentable step. The woods and forests so thickly studded around Paris are among the very chiefest of its attractions, and there are few of those who have visited

this once pleasant place but have refreshing memories of the sunny glades and soft foliage of St. Cloud, St. Germain, Marly, and Vincennes. It appears that we shall in all probability lose these charming woods for ever, for General Trochu points out that they will afford cover to the Prussians, as well as materials for fascines and gabions. "At the approach of the enemy," therefore, all these woods will be set on fire, and a quantity of inflammable matter is being now accumulated in them which will be lit as soon as the Prussian columns appear in sight. It is a grievous prospect to contemplate, the loss of these woods, and it is to be hoped that they will only be fired at the last extremity. This is not the only use, however, to which fire will be put, for the ditch that surrounds the ramparts is being filled with faggots and branches, over which inflammable matter will be poured, and lit if the Prussians ever get through the chain of forts.

There is to be a great review of the army of Paris to-morrow, which may be taken as an indication that, so far as that is concerned, the preparations are all concluded and the fighting ready to begin. It will be an extraordinary display, not matched since the great reviews of the First Republic, to which it will bear a strong resemblance, for the greater part of the army is of a decidedly *sans-culottic* appearance. Many of the men have no uniform whatever, unless the national blue blouse can be called a uniform, and the only proof that they are soldiers at all is afforded by the gun and the waist-belt holding the cartouche-box. Nevertheless they drill fairly well, and have made enormous progress, considering the short time they have been in training. For any complicated movements they are of course utterly unfit; and if, as we are told, Paris requires an army to be manœuvred outside its walls in order to be

defended, that part of the business must be left to the regulars.

The chief danger in Paris at present is from the Parisians themselves, who continue to see a spy in every other individual they meet. To ask the way to a street is considered ample evidence of guilt, and as the Prussians advance the mob becomes more suspicious and more savage. I saw a poor wretch chivied down the Rue Vivienne last night by a mob of—I should think—500 people, all howling like devils after him. I hope he escaped; if not, I would not give five minutes' purchase for his life. With all this the real Prussian spies seem not to care, and go about pretty well as they like; but they can really be of little use here, for all that is required to be known of Paris has been known long ago.

The Prussians appear to be advancing slowly enough, probably because they do not intend to close in till they have all their forces at hand. The nearest point they have reached is Coulommiers, and their line appears to reach from thence to Compiègne, from which latter town the French troops retired yesterday upon Beauvais. Laon, which was expected to offer a spirited resistance to the enemy, has indeed done so, but in quite an unexpected way. It appears that the inhabitants of the town had no kind of taste for the glory that Strasburg has won, and implored General Theremin de Haire, who was in command of the citadel, to give it up, in order to save the town from bombardment. General Theremin gave in to their prayers, and, sending away the greater part of the troops —mostly Gardes Mobiles—that he had in the citadel, admitted the Prussian staff, including, it is said, the "General Mecklenburg-Schwerin," and some 600 soldiers. The moment they had set foot in the fortress, a private soldier, whom he had instructed to that effect, set fire to a

train of powder and blew the whole place into the air with a terrific explosion, heard for miles around. It is, I suppose, an heroic act; but it seems to me to be also a monstrous breach of faith. The Parisians, however, are in ecstacies over it, and they declare that the answer to all Prussian demands for surrender will henceforth be—"Ici on ne se rend pas—on saute."

The rumours of intervention by the Neutral Powers, and of a possible armistice, continue to circulate, but I cannot ascertain that any actual steps have been taken with a view to stop hostilities. That diplomacy is at work we know, but it is not believed that anything has really been done to clear away the evident difficulties of the situation. Any peace that humiliated or dismembered France could be but temporary; but if it is a mere question of a fair money indemnity, the French would, I believe, pay, and put it down with many other millions to the debit of the Empire. Nor do I think they would object to abolish their standing army. The conscription has always been felt as the heaviest of all burdens by the people; this very existing Provisional Government is composed of men who have continually borne witness against the system, and France, as a whole, having tasted the sweets of commerce, is heartily sick of military glory. A cheap administration giving sufficient security for property is what is asked for on every hand, and if that can be obtained the country will be content to leave straining after the high flights of the Eagle, and come back gratefully to the humbler struttings of the old Gallic Cock. The Government is, I believe, anxious to obtain peace, if it can be done on honourable terms, which is certainly disinterested; for with peace old jealousies and ambitions will revive against them, and but too probably they will fall a prey to the old struggle between the

Republicans properly so called, and the Republican Socialists, who have always hitherto succeeded in rendering a Republic impossible in France. Should it ever come to this, much—all, in fact—will depend upon General Trochu. He has shown that his study of military organisation is not merely theoretical, for he has within the last few days made an army more or less manageable out of what was before merely raw levies of untrained peasants. If Socialism and Communism raise their heads, he will have to deal with them, and upon his success in doing that must depend the fate of the Republic.

Monday, Sept. 12.

The diplomats have found all their efforts to stop the war useless, for the simple reason that no common terms can be discovered on which peace can be based. Possibly they have not sought in the right direction; perhaps they have not put so delicate a matter in its most acceptable light to both sides; but however that may be, this much I can tell you for certain, that an utter want of success has up to this time attended their efforts to reconcile the pretensions of Germany with those of France. Yet they are still hopeful of staying the war before Paris is actually brought to bay; hopeful against hope, I cannot help thinking, for the Prussians continue steadily and surely to advance, while the Parisians have to a large extent recovered from the first stupefaction which the surrender of MacMahon's army and the imminence of danger to the capital first caused. Having now organised their defences in a truly wonderful manner, considering the short time they have had, they have got a stouter heart into them, and are determined, if it comes to that, to fight. As diplomacy has not been able to bring about an understanding when France was reeling, sick at heart, under the blow which shattered the last defence before Paris,

there is less prospect than ever of doing so now that time has been given for recovery. If England had taken, as she might have done, the initiative; if a week ago, after the battle of Sedan and the surrender of the Emperor, when, crushed and stunned, France was looking piteously around for a friendly hand; if then England had seriously interposed, France would have caught at the interposition like a drowning man at a straw, and would have been glad to accept any conditions of peace not absolutely humiliating. But an evil fate had scattered our Ministers and our Sovereign, every one of them, to different corners of the kingdom; a rapid decision could not be reached; time was taken to meet, to combine, to consider; and during that time the opportunity passed away. England has thus missed a rare chance of regaining a position among the nations of Europe. Had there but been in her councils sufficient energy and promptitude, she might have played the part of arbiter between Prussia and France, and have won the gratitude of both.

As it is, she has not even retained the respect of either. The old feeling of distrust of perfidious Albion appears to be reviving. "You tell us," say the French, "that this "war has distressed and afflicted you beyond measure; "you have wept journalistic and diplomatic tears over it "copiously every day; your greatest wish and desire, you "have said and repeated till we believed it, was to seize "the first moment for intervening to restore peace. "That moment arrives, and you let it pass. Instead of "acting you transmit notes between Walmer and Bal- "moral, while all the time the Prussians are marching on "Paris. For the last sixteen years you have been going "into ecstacies over the Anglo-French alliance and the "Commercial Treaty you have obtained from it; you talk "of your friendly feelings and your sympathy for our

" misfortunes; then, why is it that, when the enemy is in " the heart of our country, when our capital itself is about " to be attacked, you will not stir a finger to help us? " We know why it is. It is because you are what you " always were; because you have never been sincere with " us; because you have conceived the thought that France " is about to be trampled in the dust under the heel of " Prussia, and that in your hearts you are rejoiced at the " prospect—all the more rejoiced because you fear for " yourselves the contagion of Republican institutions. " We know now that the real sympathies of your Court " and your Government are Prussian and Orleanist, and " that the steps you have taken within the last week have " been taken for appearance sake only, and without any " serious purpose of making peace. We see that you hope " to see France crushed, and the Republic crushed with it, " and that you then expect to present us with the Count " de Paris, and to beg us to be quiet and to live, as you " do, content under a constitutional Monarchy. We shall " remember the lesson. Every step that the Prussians " take towards the capital assures our defence; every " success they achieve does something to rouse the spirit " of the country, and above all to establish the Republic. " We were too astounded at first to face the situation; we " have now recovered, and every hour brings with it a " greater and sterner determination. We shall wage, if " necessary, a war of assassination against the invader. " What do we care for St. Petersburg conventions and such- " like cobwebs? Are we not in a death-struggle? We " shall use the stiletto, the explosive bullet, poison, " treachery, anything and everything that comes to hand, " and make France a second Poland. We shall triumph; " for though armies may conquer armies, they cannot " conquer a people. And, having conquered, we shall

"remember that England deserted us in our hour of "peril."

Such is the tone adopted towards England; not among the people, for they have not yet had time to form any appreciation of the situation, but among the earnest thinking politicians—men who have hitherto believed in and supported the English alliance. I make no comment, but simply report faithfully the feeling which exists, and which is certain to spread sooner or later among all classes of the French people. This feeling is not expressed in any of the French newspapers, but it is generally entertained among the leaders of public opinion, and when the time comes it will be developed with extraordinary energy. I can only hope that when the despatches which it is to be presumed have passed between the Powers during the last week are published, they will show that England has made prompt and earnest efforts to stop the havoc and misery that this war is making, and to preserve the honour and integrity of France. At present French politicians maintain that, if English efforts had been made in earnest, they must have succeeded under the favourable circumstances of the situation produced by the capitulation of Sedan and the advent of a French Government sincerely desirous of peace. Diplomacy, I fear, must now stand aside, and let arms decide whether Paris can really make good for France the declaration that not an inch of the national territory or a stone of the national fortresses shall be alienated. The Prussian terms of peace are now said to be these three:—

1. Five milliards of francs (£200,000,000) indemnity.
2. The cession of half the French fleet.
3. The entry of the Prussian army into, and the signature of a treaty of peace in, Paris.

The first two conditions present no great difficulties.

The French would willingly pay a money indemnity, and the exact amount would be a mere matter of bargain through which a middle term could easily be reached. Nor would they make any difficulty about the fleet, for whatever may happen, when once peace is re-established they will no longer endure the charges necessary to keep up a large fleet any more than they will endure an enormous standing army. The third condition, however, will never be so much as listened to till the Prussians have won their way into the capital by sheer force of arms, and the chances of successful resistance increase with every hour.

I am more than ever struck with the great energy displayed by the Government, and with the incredible amount of work that it has contrived to do, and to do well, within the last few days. General Trochu cares little for the pomp and circumstance of war; he cares little for feathers, gold lace, and reviews; but he is an exceptionally energetic and industrious general, "more "like a Prussian than a Frenchman," as is said of him by way at once of explanation and praise. He does not intend I believe, seriously to fight the Prussians in the open; but will harass them there as much as possible in an irregular sort of way, with Franc-tireurs and cavalry, of which, however, we have very little. The forest of Bondy is filled with the splendid Bretons whom I saw march through Paris a few days ago, and who are now all armed with chassepôts instead of the muzzle-loaders with which they arrived. The main defence, however, will be from the forts and the ramparts, which are provided with every description of new gun and projectile, and with a number of extraordinary and terrible defences, some of which I am afraid may do us more harm than the enemy, unless they are very

carefully handled. The woods of Clamart and Meudon were, I am informed, burnt yesterday; but I hope the news is premature. The Parisians mourn over these beautiful woods more, perhaps, than over anything else. Losses of men and material repair themselves, they say, very soon, but it will require centuries to repair the loss of the woods. Gardes Mobiles continue to arrive from all the departments—miserably-clad, but determined-looking men, who remind one of those bare-footed soldiers of the First Republic who overran Europe. Their uniform is at most represented by a képi and a cartouche-pouch. They have no knapsacks or any worldly possessions beyond their gun and bayonet, and occasionally a loaf of bread and a few things tied up in a handkerchief. There is an army of 17,000 men at Marseilles, and like the immortal Five Hundred, *qui savaient mourir*, they will shortly set out for their long march to Paris under the red flag, rousing the people on their way, till they will bring up, it is predicted, 300,000 men.

The moral attitude of the capital improves. Every second man we meet is in uniform, and all look more earnest. There is less *fanfaronnade*; but still these gay Parisians seem to care very little for the Prussians. "What is it?" said one to me yesterday; "all the "difference will be that we shall not have to shave, and "shall wear flannel shirts instead of linen." Meantime the Prussians come steadily on, and to-day they are at Melun and Lagry, some 15 miles off, a nice little morning ride for the Uhlans. The Government has decided—and wisely, I think—to remain in Paris at all hazards; the only change made will be that the Minister of Justice will go to Tours, and all the *employés* of his department are to leave for that town to-night.

An announcement has just been posted up that no

person will be allowed to enter or to leave Paris after Thursday morning next unless provided with a special permission.

P.S. It appears that the Bois de Meudon would not take fire yesterday, but it is to be burnt with inflammable matters to-day.

CHAPTER III.

NEGOTIATIONS.

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Tuesday, 13 *Sept.*

THE rumours of negotiations for peace by the Neutral Powers have made many Parisians indulge in the hope that the capital would yet be saved from the horrors of a siege or a bombardment. The idea of Paris being actually reduced to occupy itself with anything more serious than pleasure, or that it could really ever be exposed to defend itself against a foreign enemy, seems to them too monstrous to be entertained. Although, therefore, such a prospect has been brought steadily nearer to our gates in the very tangible form of five Prussian armies converging towards the capital, the ordinary Parisian has comforted himself with the belief that at the last moment, or the last but one, Europe and the world would certainly step in and prevent the threatened profanation. That belief lingers even now among the *badauds* and *flâneurs* who throng the boulevards; but it has been quite abandoned by those who are at all informed of what is going on, and who look at facts rather than at hopes. England gave up the task of mediation in despair almost as soon as the idea had occurred to her of attempting it. Russia was then said to have taken the initiative, and the hopes of the *flâneurs* again rose high, though there were not wanting those who warned them that Russia would never seriously interfere to prevent that aggrandisement of Prussia which is part

of the original scheme laid between the two Governments. Russia having failed to do anything, it was announced two days ago that the United States had addressed to King William an "energetic note," couched in language almost implying that refusal to treat with France would result in a rupture with America. This news produced renewed hopes greater than before had ever been entertained; but last night it was known in well-informed quarters that the last effort had failed, and that all hope of stopping the enemy before he reaches Paris must be given up. This morning the *Electeur Libre,* which is in the special confidence of the Provisional Government, publishes an announcement to the effect that Mr. Washburn, having asked for authority from his Government to intervene "officieusement," or semi-officially, has received the answer that in face of the attitude of Prussia any such step would be useless, M. de Bismarck refusing at present to listen to any propositions of intervention. We know now what we have to expect. Paris must renounce all idea of being saved by any external agency, and must rely solely upon itself. The situation is thus cleared, and the effect will be to nerve the Parisians for the struggle. They have managed to procure the arms and ammunition, the want of which was their principal source of weakness, and they will fight, be sure of it, and under their improved circumstances will, I believe, hold out well, for they are now rallied and desperate, and when in that state they have always fought with a rare ferocity. If the Prussians do penetrate into Paris, I believe we shall have scenes perpetrated here such as this earth has never witnessed, for the French will stick at nothing.

This morning brought us the very pleasantest kind of Parisian weather, such as in England we only get in a lucky year for two or three days in July. The whole city

has been in movement since an early hour, for the great review of the National Guards and Mobiles had been fixed for to-day, and everybody wanted to see what kind of men they are who are to defend the capital. By eleven o'clock the whole of the National Guard, with the exception of those actually on the ramparts, and a part of the Mobiles, had taken up position, and you will be able to form an idea of the number present when I tell you that they stretched in four unbroken lines—two on each side the boulevards—from the Place de la Bastille to the Arc de Triomphe. The Place de la Bastille itself was one mass of them, so also was the Place de la Concorde, and in many parts the side streets had to be appropriated in order to find room. I should think that not more than one-third of them were in anything like a regular uniform. A corded képi, a pair of regulation trousers, or a blouse with a cross of red tape sewn on the sleeve, are considered to be quite sufficient by the majority; but they are all armed with the *tabatière* rifle, and most of the Mobiles with the chassepot. To-day was looked upon as a *fête*, and many of them had nosegays fixed in the muzzles of their guns or spiked on the end of their bayonets, while smart little *cantinières*, in the nattiest of boots and "overalls," passed in and out of the ranks distributing the contents of their barrels. An incessant rattle of drums and blare of trumpets went on in every direction, heralding the approach of fresh sections, who were received with cries of "Vive la "Garde Nationale!" and "Vive la République!" while ever and anon there arose above the din the clear, stirring notes of the "Marseillaise," or the "Chant du Départ," and occasionally the wild and savage air that recalls to the Bretons their crags and forests. Discipline and respect for orders, or for the officers who give them, are certainly not the strong points of the Garde Nationale; but then I

am afraid the orders are not always intelligible or the officers worthy of respect. I saw an instance in point on the Place de la Concorde. An aide-de-camp galloped up and instructed a captain of the National Guard to post his company on the left of, and at three paces interval from, another, which he pointed out—a simple order enough, one would think, but one which the poor captain could by no means make out, so that at last the galloper had to go and move the company himself amid the jeers of the crowd. If the officers, however, do not command the men, the men apparently think themselves fully entitled to command the officers, and they do it. I have seen a man step out of his place and give the word of command with the greatest coolness; some of the company obeyed it and some did not, having different opinions as to its merits. All this is extremely French, or rather extremely Parisian. Like all their fellow-citizens, the Garde Nationale of Paris are *raisonneurs*—sea-lawyers, as we should call them—"beggars to argue," who never know when they are beaten in the argument. Very different are the country Mobiles. They are obedient, quiet, serious men, and for anything like regular movements are far preferable to Parisians, who, unless the discipline can be tightened up under the pressure of the Prussians, will be very likely to get into confusion and to become a mob, although I am persuaded they will individually fight well.

Shortly before one o'clock General Trochu rode down the boulevards from the Place de la Bastille, accompanied by an escort of cavalry and a small staff. He wore the undress uniform of a general of division—képi, long boots, and a blue frock coat—and looked, as became the situation, serious, calm, and resolute. With him caracoled several admirals, of whom there are five in command of as many sections of the National Guard. These seafaring

heroes do not look at home in the saddle, but they will probably, like the traditional sailor, consider themselves safe "so long as there is any timber aboard" their animal. The enthusiasm at this moment was indescribable. The troops presented arms as the general passed along the line. Shouts of "Vive la République!" "Vive Trochu!" rent the air in every direction; but the general cry was a kind of French cheer, a thin, poor sound, like a prolonged E, which filled but coldly ears accustomed to the broad, burly English hurrah. Then the spectacle was over. The National Guards shouldered their arms, as often by mutual suggestion as by word of command, and marched off, some to the head-quarters of their section to be dismissed to their homes, the rest to their posts upon and about the fortifications, where they have now a regular service. There were very few lookers on, for there are scarcely any men left in Paris but those who are themselves in either the Mobiles or the National Guards, while all the women who could manage to leave have done so long ago. At the windows on the boulevards, which at any other time would have been crowded, scarce a head was to be seen.

Wednesday Sept. 14.

"Paris will never fight: it cannot possibly hold out. "Fortifications outside no use; army inside a mere rabble;" and so forth — these form, as far as I can make out, the staple opinions entertained by those wise gentlemen who write and talk themselves into the belief that they are English public opinion. They are wrong — of course for the first time, but distinctly wrong. Paris *will* fight, and in a way that will astonish the Prussians, unless I mistake. The Gardes Nationales and the Mobiles have come from the four corners of France to defend their capital. They are poorly clad, almost barefooted many of them, and for the most part with a blouse and a cartouche-

NATIONAL GUARD.

pouch for their only uniform; they are indifferently drilled, and not over well disciplined; but the old spirit of their fathers is abroad among them, and they will pour out their blood like water for their country; and if, as it may be, they perish, there are thousands more to take their place. It is a grand sight, and one that makes the blood stir, to see a great people greatly roused.

By the way, are you not sickened in England with King William's blasphemies? Here is a hoary-headed sinner, who is wading up to his neck in blood in order that he may be enabled to establish a despotism, and at every step he takes he has the unblushing impudence to claim before all men the Divinity itself as an accomplice in his wickedness, and to offer thanks to Heaven for his success in the slaughter of the beings that were made in God's own image. If men can be found to endorse that without disgust they will endorse anything.

Meantime, what are these Frenchmen to think of the professedly friendly nation that stands coldly by in this their dark hour of trial? Do you imagine they do not know that the English efforts for peace have been made for mere appearance sake? Do you suppose they do not suspect that you have a weak-kneed Government, incapable of resisting Court influence—a Government which therefore fears the contagion of a Republic, which loves the D'Orléans, and which secretly wishes to see France crushed and the Monarchy re-established? This war will leave a more bitter legacy of hatred between France and England than even between France and Prussia; for the injuries of an open foe can be forgiven, but never the desertion of a professing friend. Mr. Gladstone believed in the disruption of the United States; perhaps he believes in the final downfall of France. England, at any rate, has deserted the latter as she deserted the former in her

peril, and do not think but that both will remember it against a day of reckoning.

With all these troubles Paris is even now a far pleasanter place than London, and, taking street accidents, garotters, and police into account, I don't believe it is a bit less safe. Over the stern determination which penetrates her the joyous city wears her old aspect of brightness and gaiety, and she will receive the Prussians, as it were, with a smile on her lips. The cafés and boulevards are thronged nightly. If the Opera is shut, there is a far more stirring music to be continually heard in the fierce and tender "Marseillaise" and the rolling "Chant du Départ"; if the theatres are closed, there are comedies enacted all day in the streets—a too real tragedy about to commence.

Nevertheless, the foreigner is not so generally appreciated here just now as in the piping times of peace, when he makes his appearance simply in order to pay the piper. To chivy a spy down the boulevards is probably very good fun to the Parisians, and perhaps, as it is the only amusement they have left, it is ill-natured to begrudge it them. "Lord bless you, the fox enjoys it as much as any on 'em," is a whipper-in axiom, and therefore, of course, true; but I have lately had reason to believe that when human beings are in the position of the fox they don't like it at all. *I* don't, I know that.

The spy mania is, I think, cooling down a little inside the city, but those who venture outside run now the greatest risk of being fired at before being questioned. Several disagreeable incidents of the kind have already occurred. The foreign Ministers and Ambassadors will not be able to protect the subjects of their Sovereigns in any way for the future, and all those who are here will be subject to precisely the same treatment and liabilities as if they were Frenchmen. The *corps diplomatique*, however, is, it is said,

to remain in Paris, as the Government has decided to remain here itself. A curious complication would arise if the Prussians were to pitch shells into the Embassies; but the intention at present is to remain during the siege. We are to have all our gas cut off in a day or two, which will make it very unpleasant to walk about the streets at night, especially as the "dangerous classes" are to so large an extent armed. Probably the remedy will be to put our day bodily backwards, to rise with the sun and go to rest with him. We shall get just as many hours out of our day and shall save our oil and candles by getting up at five instead of nine, and going to bed at eight instead of twelve.

The Prussians are around Meaux, and in strong force at Crecy, and yesterday the telegraph and railway were cut at Noisy-le-Sec, close to the fort of that name, presumably, however, by the French, who have now blown up every bridge and tunnel east of Paris. Provisions are already becoming dear, and with our gas we shall lose our fish and fruit, which will not add to the pleasures of the situation. Alphonse Karr once said that if Paris were ever besieged it would surrender as soon as strawberries became scarce, and we have already arrived at that condition. Believe me, Paris will hold out, and remember that since their entry into France the Prussians have never taken a single fortified town. When Strasbourg, Metz, Toul, and Thionville have done so valiantly, it will go hard but Paris will resist as well, and every day that it holds the Prussians at bay the prospects of France must improve.

The scarcity of paper in Paris, arising from the circumstance that all the paper manufactories are in the northern provinces, now occupied or cut off by the Prussians, has caused several newspapers to diminish their size, and others to disappear entirely. They are no great loss, and nobody

will be the worse off for an infinite extension of the list of killed and wounded journals.

The intelligence I have given as to the hopelessness of negotiations at the present moment I am enabled to confirm even more strongly than yesterday; and although, according to my last information, the European neutral Powers had not yet received any answer from Prussia to the propositions which have been thrown out, there can be no doubt whatever as to what the answer will be. The Provisional Government and the Paris shopkeepers long hoped against hope, but they have now come to the conclusion that they must rely upon themselves.

M. Thiers has been sent upon a roving mission to London, St. Petersburg, and Vienna; but I understand that his business will be not to endeavour to bring about peace, although he will be invested with full powers to suggest the conditions which France would accept, but to "enlighten" the neutral Governments upon the new order of things in this country, to justify its attitude, and above all to procure the recognition of the Republic. This will probably not be at all an easy task, for the Republic is known to be contagious, and the great Monarchies are not likely to look with favour upon the prospect of having in their midst a standing proof that it is possible to do without kings and civil lists, still less to help to make this last experiment in that direction a success by giving it their countenance. Already the Republican spirit has caught fire, and it is even now smouldering throughout Europe. Italy and Spain are in ominous movement, and King William knows full well that Prussia herself is only too ready to follow the French lead had she but the opportunity. It was to save the Prussian Monarchy, menaced with extinction by his own subjects, that he first broke the peace of Europe by the spoliation of Denmark, and the permanent erection of a

Republic in France would be, in spite of his successes, about as unfortunate a result of the war for him as could be conceived. The change of system here will, therefore, only be another reason in his eyes for continuing the war, until he has, as he hopes to do, crushed France altogether, and perhaps made her accept once more a king at the hands of a trades'-union of monarchs.

Although no more talk of peace is heard, except as of a distant eventuality, and although the Parisians have made up their minds that they will have to endure a siege, their natural gaiety has by no means abandoned them. Yesterday morning at the review I was much struck by the circumstance that, among all the crowds that thronged the streets, there was scarcely a pure civilian to be seen; and when the Gardes Nationales and the Mobiles had taken up their positions, I think the whole of Paris could not have mustered 1000 able-bodied spectators of the scene in plain clothes, exclusive of women and children. All the men have been swept up into one net or another, and this careless capital is armed to the teeth. The morning is devoted to drill, the afternoon to business, but in the evening all those who are not actually for the moment on guard turn out just as usual on the boulevards, and pass an hour or two at their beloved cafés, hearing, telling, and discussing the news and exchanging patriotic resolves and puns at the expense of the enemy. The beggars also turn out, and they are a most terrible nuisance, for they literally swarm about one at that time of day, and worry for sous with a pertinacity worthy of any number of better causes. Songsters of wretched plumage and worse voice establish themselves in front of the cafés, and begin once more the never-ending "Marseillaise"; barrel-organs take up the cracked refrain; and in the intervals a man appears with a poodle, whose mouth is full of pencils, and

who offers them to one, standing on his hind-legs, as though he were a local school board. This lasts for perhaps a couple of hours, and then everybody goes home early to bed, in order to get up the next day for the seven o'clock drill, and at eleven o'clock the boulevards are pretty well deserted. While talking of the streets, I may say that among the small discomforts of being in a state of siege the worst seems to be that the authorities have given up the use of watering-carts, and the consequence is that one lives in a cloud of fine yellow dust, which gets into one's very soul and spirit. Some of the newspapers have adopted the atomic theory of the propagation of diseases, and are impressing upon the Government the doctrine that dust breeds epidemics. I hope that will frighten them into watering the streets.

I observe that you have been informed by telegraph that "an official decree has been published, re-establishing the tax on butchers' meat." Mr. Reuter has driven us to despair before now with his translations, but at this time he really should have agents who understand the meaning of words, both French and English. What has been re-established is not a tax at all, although the French word is *taxe*, but the system of fixing officially a maximum price for meat; not a very enlightened measure, but considerably less foolish than it would be to impose a tax under present circumstances upon one of the prime necessaries of existence. The last flight of the timid has taken place to-day, and those who are now in Paris may make up their minds to stay through the siege. The mails, however, will continue to be sent as long as there is a railway open, but they will no doubt suffer delay.

The military preparations are pretty well completed now —so far completed, at any rate, as they will be before the Prussians arrive, for we expect to hear the first shots fired

within twenty-four hours. Every now and then yesterday there came upon the air a distant rumbling, booming sound, which announced that another bridge had been blown up before the enemy, and in the evening a melancholy and imposing spectacle was to be seen from the heights of Montmartre. All the woods on the northern and eastern sides of the capital had been fired, and a long band of flame arose in the distance, from Argenteuil on the left to Rosny on the right, flaming and flickering in the wind, and lighting up the horizon with a glare that brought desolation to many a house and sorrow to many a heart. The forces now in and about Paris are enumerated thus by the *Constitutionnel* of this morning:—100,000 Gardes Mobiles, 170,000 Gardes Nationales, 9,000 Corps Francs, and 70,000 regular troops, including gendarmes, sailors, and other special corps—a total of 349,000 fighting men, all equally determined, though not all equally well armed and disciplined. The forts, at any rate, are amply provided, excellently well armed, and manned by men who may be thoroughly relied upon. If the Prussians can manage to break through them, or to capture two or three, or even under certain conditions one only, they will be well resisted on the ramparts; and if they pass them, there is a third line of defence which will give them more trouble than all the rest put together.

It is probable that the exact truth as to the blowing up of the citadel of Laon will never be thoroughly known. What is certain is that the civil inhabitants were strongly opposed to any resistance being offered to the Prussians; so much so that they took General Theremin prisoner, and were trying to frighten him into a promise to surrender, when he was rescued by a detachment of Mobiles. It is strongly to be presumed that the explosion was the result neither of heroism nor of treachery, but of accident, for no

less than 300 Mobiles were killed by it just as they had been freed by the Prussians, who themselves only lost some eighty men. The capitulation had not been signed, although King William says it had, for it was being discussed in the courtyard of the citadel when the explosion took place. All the other strong places still hold out, and seem likely to do so. A discouraging despatch has, however, been received to-day from General Uhrich, the commandant at Strasburg, who says, under date of the 9th :— "Situation worse; unceasing bombardment; crushing ar- "tillery. How can I pass the Rhine without bridges, "without boats? Abandon that impracticable idea. "Honourable sortie this morning, but dearly paid for, and "without any other result than that of imposing respect "upon the enemy." You will see from this that means of communication to and from the beleagured city still exist.

The Bourse does not seem to care any more than the boulevardiers for the war. The Rente, which before the war was only at 72fr., closed yesterday at 54f. 25c., and is said to be "firm."

The postal service has been as regular as in the most ordinary times up to this morning, but the mail which left London yesterday morning appears to be the last that has been able to come right through. The letters due this morning at ten o'clock have not yet appeared, nor does anybody know when they will appear.

CHAPTER IV.

CHÂTILLON.

Sept. 19.

THE Prussians are now upon us, and the investment was completed yesterday, which must therefore be counted as the first of the siege. Lord Lyons only just managed to get off in a hurry by an early special train. The first serious conflict has taken place to-day on the heights of Châtillon, which lie over and look into Paris on the south-western side. The wildest reports are in circulation on the boulevards. "Fort Montrouge has been taken," and "Fritz is captured," are the two extremes of the bad and good news that is eagerly received and discussed. The real truth, as far as I can gather it, seems to be that these heights have been lost almost without a stand being made for them. Their importance is enormous, and they were strongly occupied by the best troops available; but, strange to say, although there has been ample notice of the enemy's coming, nothing like adequate defensive works had been constructed for them. A redoubt had indeed been begun, but barely begun, and when the Prussians arrived the troops scarcely waited to receive them before the fatal cry arose of "sauve qui peut." The Mobiles, I am told, fought and stood fairly, but they lack organisation, and are not therefore on equal terms with regular troops. The Line, however, and the Zouaves especially, demoralised by the campaign, gave way at the first attack, and have occupied

themselves all day in plundering the houses of Châtillon and the adjoining villages. The loss of these heights is irremediable, for they are the best position for attack anywhere round Paris, and it is hard to see how Forts Vanves, Issy, and Montrouge can resist the plunging fire which the Prussians will be able to pour into them when once they get a little heavy artillery into position on Châtillon.

Sept. 21.

If I wished to do my worst enemy the worst injury I could think of, I should just now put him down in the middle of Paris. You cannot imagine how horribly irritating it is to be here, in the very centre of a circle of fighting, hearing in still moments the distant roar of the cannon, seeing the reflection in the sky of the flames of war, meeting wounded men, runagates, and heroes by the dozen—each one with a more exciting tale than the other—and yet to be debarred from coming anywhere near the scene of conflict. It might have been supposed that the experience of the past few weeks would have taught the French the advantage of having correspondents with their forces, and giving them facilities for seeing whatever is going on; but not at all. M. Jules Favre is, I happen to know, generally most anxious that every encouragement should be given to those who can alone give to the world an impartial account of the defence of Paris, and so, too, are most of the other members of the Provisional Government, as might be expected from their connection with the press; but that is of no use in the face of the perfectly courteous but unconquerable resistance of the military authorities. The fact is that these military authorities, being quite unaccustomed and quite unprepared to deal with the very irregular forces who form the main part of the garrison, are themselves afraid to move about, and do not like

to take even the small amount of responsibility involved in giving such facilities as they can to others. The answer which has been made me at least twenty times to as many applications is that it is "too dangerous"; and if the correspondent replies, as I ventured to do to a superior officer, that he is well aware of and accepts the dangers at his own risk, the only result is a perfectly polite but absolutely final shrug of the shoulders. If any further effort is made, it is met with advice to write about the attitude and physiognomy of Paris; which, however, as no bombs have yet fallen nor any barricades yet risen in the streets, is in no way different from what it has been since the commencement of the siege.

Driven to desperation by my last infructuous effort, which, however, is not the last I shall make, I yesterday morning started at twelve o'clock in a victoria, accompanied by a friend, to make a *reconnaissance en force* on our own responsibility, at our own risk, and in reliance only upon our own resources. We were told that fighting was going on at St. Denis, which is some three miles from Paris, on the northern side, and is protected by the most distant of the detached forts. Accordingly we told our coachman to drive thither, with instructions neither to ask nor to answer questions, but to go straight towards the enemy till he was stopped; our idea being that we should then leave him and take possession of some one of the many unoccupied houses from which to observe the fight. The coachman, though he did not at first appreciate the delights of the journey —especially as "a comrade had been taken by the Prus-"sians, carriage and all"—made no great difficulty, and we drove to the gate of St. Ouen, in spite of a warning from a friend whom we met on the way that we should never get out, and that if we did we should never come back unless as corpses or prisoners. An order had been

given that nobody was to be allowed to enter or to leave the city, and it was a most nervous moment when we drew near the gate. A crowd of Mobiles were around it, sentries, with fixed bayonets, of course, but also, as we observed with encouragement, a number of peasants and other civilians going and coming with apparent freedom. We dared not speak, but munched our cigars silently with as careless an aspect as possible, and luckily, as we drew to the gate, a diversion was made by a pretty peasant girl, who escaped from the soldiers with whom she had been talking, and amid the laughter of the crowd ran lightly up the ramparts. A very little attracts the attention of a Mobile, but nothing more readily than a pretty girl, and the sentries never so much as gave us a look as we rumbled over the drawbridge with our hearts in our mouths. Once outside we felt completely safe, and assuming the air of landed proprietors who had come out to look after their property, we rattled slowly along the road in our weak-springed, badly-horsed vehicle. I cannot venture, for fear of compromising the plans of the defence, to give you any account of the obstacles which the Prussians will meet on this side of Paris. Suffice it to say that they are very numerous, and many of them quite novel. If you want to know anything more you must await the accounts from Berlin; where, however, I fear, they even now know as much as I could tell, were I to tell all. The suburb outside was a melancholy scene of desolation—all the trees cut down, all the houses near the walls cleared away, and all those beyond the line of clearance shut up and deserted, save here and there a liquor-shop, which, as they are the first to open, are always the last to close in any country. The only sign of life was an occasional belated peasant with his cart and family, or a lean, forsaken dog sneaking mournfully along with his nose on the ground in search of

food. Beyond the fringe of houses we came upon the open fields, where a wretched few, barely clad in tattered blouses, were clearing off the last of the vegetables still left. The road itself was silent and lonely, but in the distance we could see a considerable body of Mobiles, as to whom the speculation was whether they would arrest, shoot, or let pass two such suspicious characters as we were. They let us pass. Poor fellows, they seemed too weary to take care for anything. Strewn, so to say, by the side of the road, they appeared to have passed the night where they were, and many of them were still indulging in sound slumber under the friendly hedge, their feet in the ditch and their heads on their knapsacks.

Immediately afterwards we passed through the village of St. Ouen, not without meeting many suspicious looks, but without any further interference, and held our way to St. Denis; our spirits rising with the good luck that had so far befriended us, and with the prospect of coming upon the skirmish which at least we thought the presence of the Mobiles indicated, though we could neither hear nor see any signs of anything. At St. Denis we met more Mobiles, and, the bridge being blown up, we were very civilly directed to go round by the Fort de l'Est, which lies nearly between the town and Paris. At the bridge opposite the fort we were for the first time stopped, but it was only to be told to throw away our cigars; a measure of evident necessity, as workmen were then engaged in putting in on the crown of the arches the powder with which the bridge at the right moment will be destroyed. St. Denis itself looked, so far as the houses went, as desolate as the suburbs near Paris, all the shops being shut up and all the houses closed; but the streets were absolutely overflowing with troops of all arms and descriptions — Artillery, Line, Zouaves, Gendarmerie, Mobiles, and

National Guards, all in a motley crowd, relieved at rare intervals by the blouse of inferior, but nowhere by the coat of superior, civil life. In the Place soldiers were washing themselves and their linen at the fountain, laughing and joking, and occasionally pausing to envy their comrades who came in from the country laden with cabbages and cauliflowers, which had probably been "requisitioned" with the least possible formality. Ranged along the houses were large barrels filled with water, and the side streets were filled with tents, round which the soldiers stood and lay in the lightest of camp *déshabille.* About two-thirds through the town our progress was suddenly stopped by the disappearance of the road, which is paved here with stones, after the London fashion, and looking forward we saw that the stones had been formed into a series of barricades, which rose to the first stories of the houses, and around which clustered a crowd of soldiers and sentries. From the quiet and careless attitude of everybody and everything, we had long given up the belief that any fighting was going on; but we were of course anxious to get through the town on the chance of seeing something, were it only a distant Uhlan, and we determined to storm the barricade, which accordingly we proceeded to do, looking as much as possible as though it belonged to us. Not a bit of it. As we approached, a sentry crossed his rifle, and said, "You must carry stones to the barricade." The idea of a day's forced labour was of course not to be endured, and I at once announced that if that was the case we would retire; but it was too late, and the injunction was repeated with such unpleasant emphasis that I asked for the officer of the post. The only reply was, "You "must carry a stone." "What, only one?" "Yes, "one." "Oh! in that case, of course we will gladly "assist in the defence of the town;" whereupon we

shouldered each a stone, and marched off with them to the barricade some fifty yards off, where we threw them down. My friend was mean enough to choose a light one, for which he was severely rebuked by a casual patriot; but at any rate the stones brought us to the barricade, which we promptly passed by a passage still left open on the foot-path.

Scarcely had we got beyond it when an officer and three men arrested us. "Pardon, messieurs; I suppose you don't carry stones to amuse yourselves." "Of course not, sir; we were obliged to do it." "Indeed! Well, your papers—who are you?" "Sir," said I, "we are two English journalists come to chronicle the heroic defence of Paris; and here is a 'laisser-passer.'" This worked an instant revolution in the officer's sentiments; his suspicions changed to friendliness, his abruptness to courtesy. Of course we must be mad, he thought, I have no doubt, to come to St. Denis; but then English journalists always are mad, and he let us proceed with many excuses. We passed another barricade; then a piece of regular fortification thrown across the street, with scarp, parapet, ditch, and all complete; and finally reached an open place, whence branched off two roads closed by fortifications and gates, through which, as an officer amiably told us, nobody whatever was allowed to pass. We returned, therefore, but before we had taken three steps were informed that the sergeant of the guard wished to speak to us. The same account of ourselves and my "laisser-passer" again procured our release; but we had scarcely replaced our hats from saluting the sergeant when a Zouave began evidently to follow us, and finally coming between us, said, suddenly, "You spik Angleesh?" "Yes, we did," we replied; upon which he smiled and shook his head with self-congratulation, and called another Zouave to assist in taking us to

the guard-room. The other Zouave, however, didn't see it, and went his way, and I explained to our friend that we should be most happy to accompany him. "Ah!" he exclaimed; "now you speak French!" a discovery which he evidently regarded as a conclusive proof of our being Prussians. The officer, when we saw him, of course relieved us from this intelligent zou-zou, and, having now had enough of St. Denis, we regained our trap, and returned as we had come without incident.

This little excursion will give you some idea of the difficulties of a correspondent. To be arrested three times in almost ten minutes will perhaps seem to English readers a pretty considerable nuisance; but, in fact, the arrest itself comes almost as a relief. You have no idea what a nervous thing it is to move about under a thousand jealous eyes, all turned suspiciously upon one, and belonging to twice the number of ready hands burning to put a bullet or a little cold steel into the first stranger they come across. The oppression of the thing is terrible, and I would rather be under any amount of fair open fire. You dare not look at the name of a street or ask for the slightest information, or even so much as turn your head; and to point at any object or to take a note would be as much as your life was worth. The only safety—and that, of course, is purely comparative—lies in assuming an air of most careless indifference to everything around; and, when the inevitable arrest comes, in remaining perfectly cool and showing the most perfect frankness. All the same, I am convinced that had it not been for my pass our friend's prediction would have been realised, and that we should never have returned safe to Paris. When we did return, I assure you we were looked upon with an incredulous wonder by no means vouchsafed to those troops who are hourly returning from actual battle. And yet it is but a

few months ago that St. Denis was a favourite pilgrimage for all visitors to this altered capital. The well-known caricaturist Cham was less lucky than us, for he was arrested yesterday on the same road, and passed the night in prison.

The engagement on Monday last at Châtillon is looked upon here as having been on the whole favourable, as it is said that the French artillery, which was admirably served, put as many as 7000 Prussians *hors de combat*, and that on our side only 400 men were hit. What is certain is that the Prussians were engaged all the afternoon, all the night, and part of the next morning in burying their dead and removing their wounded, so that their losses must have been considerable. Nevertheless, the heights of Châtillon are in their hands, and they will know how to make good use of them. The conduct of a portion of the regular troops—regiments composed, it would appear, of those disbanded soldiers upon whose demoralised aspect I remarked a fortnight ago—was disgraceful; and General Trochu, in an order of the day published this morning, tells them so in the very plainest of language, singling out especially the Zouaves, who certainly deserve the most severe condemnation. General Trochu declares that he is "firmly resolved to put an end to such disorder," and that he shall mercilessly apply the penalty of death imposed by the military code for all disobedience, cowardice, or pillage —a penalty which will not be limited to the soldiery alone, for we are all under martial law now. I fear there will still be some tenderness in carrying out these rigorous resolutions, but nothing else will maintain discipline, and without discipline the defence of Paris might as well be abandoned at once. It is all the more important to keep a firm hand over the troops, because their example cannot fail to influence the raw and half-trained Mobiles and

National Guards, upon whom, after all, the greater burden of the defence must fall. At present I see too much timidity everywhere among those in power: they scarcely dare command, and, if their commands are disregarded, take no steps to vindicate their authority; in fact, they appear now to be in doubt whether they have any authority at all. Among other significant indications of this, I may mention that they have not in any one case ventured to apply the laws of war to the numerous spies who have been taken, and who are now being maintained in prison at the public expense. This clemency, or timidity, naturally robs the profession of the spy of half its terrors, and half excuses the lengths to which the Parisians are disposed to go on the mere suspicion of having a spy before them. If they feel, as they do, that in the hands of the authorities he will escape with nothing worse than imprisonment, it is not very unnatural that they should conceive the idea of inflicting summarily with their own hands that penalty with which the Prussians never fail to visit a French spy, convicted as such. I am convinced that this feeling is growing, and it is this that makes Paris every day more dangerous. The Government is where it is, if for anything, to defend the country, and that cannot be done by sprinkling rose-water, or even by printing vigorous proclamations, but only by vigorous acts.

The absence of Jules Favre, who has been at the Prussian head-quarters at Meaux since last Sunday, and the knowledge that he is strenuously endeavouring to negotiate, are not very favourably received here; it is feared that he may be about to submit France to humiliating conditions. Yesterday there was a deputation of officers of the National Guard, who protested against any peace being made at all so long as the enemy is on French soil, and the feeling in Paris is that it is better to fight the thing through now we

have got so far. In recognition of this spirit the Government has this morning published a proclamation, in which it recalls the declaration made by Jules Favre that "not an "inch of territory, nor a stone of our fortresses," should be ceded, and declares that it will stand by that declaration to the last. I believe that is still the settled determination here, and that any Government who made peace on any other basis would have to deal at once with an insurrection. Moreover, I still believe that Paris will be desperately defended; for even if the *bourgeois* class were to fail, the workmen of the capital and the peasants from the provinces would defend the barricades that are even now being raised, and dispute every street and every house. There is a wondrous energy and desperation in a people fighting for their hearths with their foot actually on them. To show you the kind of spirit there is abroad, I may tell you that there is being formed a battalion of *jeunes gens* from sixteen to eighteen years of age, and a friend of mine who was at the Prefecture on Monday saw with his own eyes this scene. A very handsome and elegantly-dressed lady came to the Commissaire de Police to complain that she had been arrested for wearing men's clothes. She was, as she explained, "in the artillery" as a gunner, and meant to fight on the ramparts. Her ordinary attire, she said, was in the way for an artillerywoman, and she asked permission to wear the male garb. This permission the Commissaire promised to get for her if possible, and when she was gone he said shrewdly to my friend, "Son amant ne doit pas "être loin." This is not the only case of the kind, but it is one that I can guarantee, and when there is such a spirit in the women it will go hard but the men will do their duty.

La France has just announced that Bismarck told Jules Favre, who returned yesterday, that he intends to "crush "France as a European Power," that he "means to keep

"Alsace and Lorraine, and to enter Paris if he has to burn "half the town." It is almost incredible that he should have said either this or anything like this, for he must know that such language would but make the French desperate. Possibly he does not care by this time for their desperation; if so he is wrong, and he may find out as much only when it is too late. It is said that some of the unexpected methods of defence are already at work, for two torpedoes, I am assured, were exploded on Monday beneath a column of Prussians, who, we are told, lost 300 men by the explosion. The effect produced by the announcement of Bismarck's terms is visible on the boulevards; the enthusiasm is indescribable—the faces that were sombre are lit up with resolution, and the word everywhere is "vaincre "ou mourir." The old French spirit is rising, or I mistake. To-day I saw a new levy of Gardes Nationales, blouses to a man, without a black coat or a decent pair of shoes among them—"the Rochefort battalion," as one of them told me, from Belleville and La Villette. These men are the kind that do real service, and if all the troops were like them I should have no doubt as to the result of the siege.

CHAPTER V.

MORE NEGOTIATIONS.

Sept. 22.

THE *Journal Officiel* contains a short account of Jules Favre's interview with Bismarck, in which, after recalling his own manifesto of the 5th September, and the desire therein expressed to conclude peace if it could be done without humiliation, the Foreign Minister says, "Prussia "answers these overtures by demanding that she should "keep Alsace and Lorraine by right of conquest, and would "not even consent to consult the populations." Prussia demands as a preliminary condition of an armistice the occupation of the besieged places, including the fort of Mont Valérien, and the garrison of Strasburg to be prisoners of war. Such terms were of course rejected without hesitation. "Paris," says Jules Favre, "will "resist to the last extremity; the departments will come to "its aid, and, God helping, France shall be saved." *Alea jacta est*, the attempts to negotiate have ended as I always predicted they would, and France must now trust to her own right arm. If her courage fails now, if the demoralisation of luxury, the timidity of shopkeepers with money to lose and fortunes to make, or the incapacity of leaders, should betray her now, she must sink for ever, and disappear from among the nations of the world, and she will deserve her fate. But if it should come to that it will only be after a struggle such as history has not yet recorded, and I do

not envy those who can sit quietly by and behold unmoved the prospect of the extinction of this great country, the chosen centre of modern civilisation, and the birthplace of every modern idea that has ever borne fruit.

There was no serious fighting yesterday. General Schmitz made a reconnaisance on the western side from Courbevoie, by Suresnes, to St. Cloud, in which places the Prussians have not yet appeared, and there was the usual firing between the advanced posts, but that is all. A serjeant of the Mobiles, who is lodged in the same house with me, has just arrived from oupost duty beyond the fort of Bicêtre, on the southern side. He tells me that, at four o'clock this morning, a large force of Prussians advanced under cover of a thick fog, and that they were "balayés"—swept clean away by the fire of the fort. Yesterday a boy of fifteen was taken in triumph to General Trochu. He had killed a Prussian and brought in his arms and helmet, which he keeps as a trophy.

People are taxing their ingenuity to find means of communicating with the outer world, and several ideas, more or less wild, have been suggested. In the night the Government sent up a balloon with two men, and a selection of letters, among which I hope and believe was one of mine to you. This is at present the favourite method of communication, but it is not the only one, and in a day or two I hope we may be able to organise a more or less reliable service. I have this morning seen Mr. O'Sullivan, formerly United States Minister to Portugal, who has just returned from a mission from Mr. Washburn to the Prussian headquarters, which, however, he did not reach, being detained and finally sent back by the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, with whom and his staff he passed a pleasant five days. On his return he was of course arrested, and, after being nearly torn to pieces, was put into a cell with a number of

drunken troopers for a whole night. The Moblots who took him were quite amazed at his audacity in crossing the lines under fire; but he told them that "Americans are not "accustomed to be afraid," which, I hope, will do them good. The Prussians are apparently determined to allow nothing and nobody to leave Paris. Three Englishmen who made the attempt, under a touching belief in the virtue of Lord Clarendon's passport, have been politely but firmly sent back, and are now here. I should think it must have been one of these gentlemen who, a few days ago, threatened to bring an action against the Northern Railway Company because they would not give him a return ticket to Charing Cross. Nevertheless, I know for certain that this morning letters were received from outside by the Government, containing, I am told, the most encouraging information from the provinces, which are, it is said, rising *en masse* to such an extent that in a fortnight 800,000 men will be ready to march against the Prussian investing force.

The defence from within is already taking a desperate character. The generals, as is the wont of generals, have long insisted upon making war only according to tradition. They hold that while it is perfectly fair and most honourable forcibly to introduce steel and lead into the vital parts of their enemies, or to blow them up with gunpowder, it is barbarous and disgraceful to use to the same end any means involving a further advance of science. Their scruples, however, are to be vanquished. I have to-day seen a quiet, unmartial, frock-coated, keen-eyed little chemist, who has within his knowledge more effectual and terrible methods of warfare than all the cocked-hats in Europe ever covered. He assures me that with a recently discovered preparation—fulminate of picrate of potass, which is ten times worse than picrate of potass in its simple form—he can blow the Prussian army off the face

of the earth. He has another preparation which at once asphyxiates and burns any living creature upon which it is projected, and in addition to that he declares that he possesses the means of decomposing water itself, and turning it into consuming flames. This gentleman is in the employ of the Government, and has prepared a most diabolical reception for the Prussians. They have, indeed, he declared, already experienced the awful effects of his skill in the explosion of two torpedoes, which are said to have killed seven hundred men, and the exposed points of the defence are thickly sown with like engines of destruction. As I looked at this chemist, with his black coat and gleaming eyes, it seemed to me that I saw before me in the flesh that destroyer, if it were so, of the whole pomp and circumstance of war of whom I have dreamed. The prancing charger, the nodding plume, the gold lace, and gaudy attire of the trained killers of men have invested them with a factitious glory before which all lesser creatures bow; but here comes a little man with his secret who blows them and their glory away together with a breath, and leaves only himself in his frock-coat, smiling grimly at their ignorance of their own art of killing. This very siege of Paris will, I hope, bring war to that, for these terrible engines cannot be used once without the example being followed. When war becomes a mere duel of skill between chemists its glory is gone, and when the risk of it is so enormously increased, its attractions will disappear as well. It may seem cold-blooded to talk in this way, but if we are to kill each other we may as well do it as handsomely and effectually as possible, and at any rate those methods of which I have spoken have this advantage—that they kill surely and at once, without pain or suffering of any kind.

I find it is expected that out of the elections of the 28th

will come a regular constituted Government, as far, at any rate, as Paris itself is concerned. The elect, of whom there will be some eighty or ninety men, will constitute the Commune of Paris—will be a regular Convention, which will take over the Government from its present possessors, and delegate some three or four of its members to form the Executive. The general elections for the Constituent Assembly are postponed indefinitely, as was to be expected, for it was simply impossible that they could be held.

A Zouave was shot this morning for attempting to murder an officer who had arrested him as a *fuyard.*

Sept. 23.

The *Journal Officiel* of this morning contains a detailed account by M. Jules Favre of his two interviews with Bismarck, which will do more for the defence of Paris and of France than all the men and guns the Government has hitherto got together. If any European statesmen have hitherto been blinded by Prussian protestations to the aggressive designs of King William and his counsellor, they can be blind no longer; if they have really up to this time believed that Prussia has been waging in self-defence a war forced upon her by the Emperor, and from which she would gladly desist if the opportunity were offered, that belief must vanish. Bismarck, who at first declined to recognise the Provisional Government in any way, and refused to hold any communication with them, at length consented to receive Jules Favre, who, as I have already written to you, left Paris for the Prussian head-quarters on Sunday morning last. Put into a few words, M. Jules Favre's eloquent account of his mission amounts to this: that, as a condition of peace, Prussia demands the departments of Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin, as well as a part of the department of Moselle, together with Metz, Château-Salins, and Soissons. As conditions of an armistice to allow of

the election of a Constituent Assembly, she requires that Phalsburg and Toul should be surrendered, that the garrison of Strasburg should be given up as prisoners of war, and that the Prussian troops should occupy the fort of Mont Valérien, or else that the Assembly should meet at Tours. The idea of insisting that all the places she has been unable to take should be surrendered—above all, that the brave garrison of Strasburg should be abandoned to the too bitter lot of Prussian prisoners—was too much even for M. Jules Favre, and he broke off the interview at once, and returned to Paris; "bien malheureux," as he says, but determined, as there was no other solution, to fight to the last. No other result could have been expected under the circumstances, unless from a belief in the moderation of Prussia and the sincerity of her desire for peace, which I have never been simple enough to entertain. Bismarck appears to rely upon the internal dissensions of the Parisians. "If," he said to M. Favre, "Paris "is not taken in a few days, the Government will be upset "by the people." Assuming—which is, however, unsafe —that he really entertains this opinion, he never was so mistaken in his life. The most remarkable of all the remarkable features of this siege is the universal determination of all men and all parties to sink for the present every difference, and to unite in support of the Government. I speak with all kinds of people, read all organs of the press, and see most that passes, and I find everywhere the same recognition of the absolute necessity of sinking all causes in that of the defence of the country. What makes this so striking is that it is the first time it has happened to public opinion in France since France has had a public opinion. The divisions of the French are matters of history, and even the strong-handed *régime* of the Empire could not prevent their expression. But at

present all are at one, although all do not by any means think the present Government is the best that could be. All support them, both by word and deed. There remains to the Prussians only the prospect of taking Paris by the sheer force of their own arms; and if the external appearance of things and the attitude of people go for anything, the chances of that prospect being, as they expect, realised in a short time become daily and hourly fewer. The armed citizens who defend the capital are rapidly becoming trained soldiers. They have discovered already that it is possible to fight without being killed, and that first lesson learnt, confidence and audacity follow as matters of course. My friends the "Moblots" who are lodged with me come back in increased good spirits from every one of their excursions outside the walls, and if one half we hear is true, the Prussians must already have lost an enormous number of men.

I cannot help recurring again to my grievances against the military leaders. My seventh and last attempt, supported by the very highest authority, to be allowed a few facilities to see the fighting, has failed. All I ask is to be allowed to go outside the walls, and to return; but General Trochu will neither hear of that nor of anything else, and I am told that I ought to think myself too lucky that he does not have me tried for the excursions I have already made. It is really too short-sighted to show so much jealousy of those whose only mission is to record, for the information of the world, and to the glory of generals and soldiers, the feats of arms that they effect; but as they are determined to keep us shut up in Paris, we shall be able to record nothing, unless it comes to bombardment and barricades.

I have just returned from the Trocadéro, whither the sound of the cannon, which has been thundering with peculiar persistence all this morning, drew me. It was

full of people, who were trying to see through a mist that lies over the southern side of Paris the movements of the troops. By the help of a good glass I made out a few bodies of Uhlans on the horizon to the right, and every now and then could see the smoke of the cannon rise from Fort Bicêtre on the left. It is asserted that a great victory has been gained this morning in that direction, and that 15,000 Prussians are *hors de combat*, and 6000 prisoners. I cannot believe but that this is grossly exaggerated.

Midnight.

Nothing stirring. The cannon booming irregularly.

Sept. 24.

The *Journal Officiel* contains the official account of yesterday's engagements, which, although far from having had the results rumoured, did yet result in some substantial advantages for the French arms. On the northern side a sortie was made from St. Denis, and the enemy driven out of Pierrefitte, a village a mile and a half or two miles distant. The village was held all the day, and only abandoned at night because it was judged useless to occupy it permanently. On the southern side, Villejuif, about which the greater part of the previous fighting has taken place, was again the scene of an engagement. The Prussians tried an early morning surprise, and at 1 a.m. advanced to and occupied Villejuif itself and the plateau of Hautes Bruyères, their object being to introduce a strong body of troops between Forts Bicêtre and Montrouge. The surprise failed, however; strong reinforcements were thrown out of Paris on either side of the Prussian advance, and, arriving at the *pas de course*, carried Villejuif and Hautes Bruyères after a hard fight at 6 a.m., and took the Prussians in flank with rifle, cannon, and mitrailleuses, while Forts Bicêtre and Montrouge cannonaded them in

front. By nine o'clock they had retired in some disorder, with heavy losses in dead, wounded, and prisoners, and both Villejuif and Hautes Bruyères still remain in the hands of the French. The Mobiles and the National Guards fought extremely well, and with the coolness of old soldiers; while the artillery, which has been unduly depreciated since Woerth, was, as it has been throughout here, admirably served. The streets near the Porte d'Italie were thronged with people, who received the troops and General Trochu with frenzied applause, and offered cigars and sympathy to the wounded, many of whom were Prussians—fair-haired, innocent-looking boys, most of them, and by no means the ferocious warriors that they have been painted by the Parisians.

If anybody had told me three months ago that on this day I should be walking along the boulevards seriously considering of sending letters to England by means of a balloon, I should have avoided the prophet as a dangerous lunatic; yet that is precisely what I have just been doing. Since Sunday last we have been entirely isolated, and although this is perhaps of all places in the world that in which isolation is least felt, yet to those who have been accustomed to read their newspapers and get their tradesmen's bills with a touching regularity, it is a novel sensation, and not altogether pleasing, to feel that one is out of reach for an altogether indefinite time equally of *Times* and tailors. We shall survive that, however, if we can only get news *out*, and the easterly wind that has blown to-day has started the idea of the balloons, one of which I have myself undertaken to look after and to get if possible; and if this letter ever reaches it will be by that channel in all probability.

The one irritating feature about being thus shut up is that, so far, we have not had any excitement to justify it

at all. Not a bomb has fallen, not a horse has been eaten as yet, and one's dinner costs one just the same money and consists of precisely the same elements that it always did. It is rather hard that, with the Prussians pounding away all round us, and with the very sound of their cannon booming constantly in our ears, we should be in danger of feeling dull. Yet so it is. The authorities don't encourage on-lookers—in fact, they are too much afraid for their own skins to go about much, for the gentle Moblot has taken to firing at everything he sees; the result of which two distinct discouragements is that very few of those who are here will see anything at all.

To-night there was a meeting outside a café of all the correspondents of English newspapers, who, finding out-door conversation inconvenient, did me the honour to adjourn to my rooms, sinking, like the Parisians, all our home differences for a common object. The *Times* and the *New York Tribune* met together, the *Pall Mall* lay down with the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Standard* played on the *Daily News* nest, and the *Morning Post* could lead them, so gentle were they. It was arranged that we should secure the balloonist, and to him is committed this letter, which, if any Prussian gets and reads it, I hope may induce him to desert.

CHAPTER VI.

CLOSE INVESTMENT.

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Sept. 25.

LAST night we heard of two balloons which were to start, but these two soon became one, and an arrangement was made to avail ourselves of it. The start was to be made to-day at three o'clock, and on rising I was delighted to find that there was a steady N.E. wind blowing. At the last moment but one the balloonist raised an unexpected financial difficulty, requiring to be paid a hundred pounds before starting, whereas we were determined to hold firm to our proposal to give £5 for each letter on delivery in London. I went to negotiate immediately, and had finally arranged everything, when a breathless man rushed into the room, exclaiming—"Le ballon est parti!" We were all "struck of a heap," but the news was too true, for at ten o'clock this morning General Trochu had suddenly gone down, cut the cord, and sent the balloon off on military service, and I am left with all that able correspondence on my hands which, it was hoped, would so fully enlighten the world in a few days as to the situation and aspect of Paris. Balloons are like women, and must be taken in the humour, or not at all; but the amount of courting this departed one has taken makes it doubly disgusting that it should thus have run off with a soldier. The chief business of a correspondent just now is not so much to write as to run about after the means of sending

his writings, and it requires a sanguine temperament to be at all trustful of any of the channels hitherto opened. There are only two balloons now left in Paris, but more are to be made.

There has been but little firing during the night. To-day more processions are inundating the Strasburg statue. The *Journal Officiel* contains an eulogy of horse-meat, which is significant.

We are rapidly getting reduced to siege diet. The fresh fish, after holding out for a much longer time than I should have thought possible, has now followed the example of the butter and eggs, and disappeared entirely except in a salted form, of which the mere memory is enough to scrape the roof off one's mouth. Vegetables at present show but little signs of exhaustion, and bread is as much at discretion as ever, which is comforting, for we are told by authority—and in these times the mere assertion of authority is proof positive—that bread and wine are all that is required to maintain us in health, at any rate in health enough to be fired at by the Prussians. Meantime, dining at my cheap restaurant, I strongly suspect my *filet de bœuf* to be horse, and I know that my cucumber is at least turnip, if nothing worse. Probably there are still favoured spots in Paris where every delicacy of every season is still to be found, but few, indeed, are those who can pay their footing there. We are all as poor as church mice. Ready money is a thing that scarcely exists, and there are many very smart young men who cannot muster 50fr. to keep them through the siege. The Government has extended the blessed system of credit by decreeing that nobody need pay their rent when it is due, which is so far a relief to all but those who have rents to receive. One can get trusted, too, as a rule at one's restaurant when once known; but these little reliefs go but a short way after all, and the Parisians have

set themselves, as gaily as is their wont, to be poor with grace, and to pare and economise in every direction. As for the few English who are left, their only resource when all the cash is gone will be to take possession of the two months' supply of provisions which Lord Lyons has left behind him in the cellars of the Embassy. They can excuse themselves by the reflection that he would be certain to ask them to dinner if he were still here.

People are beginning to discover that there are two sides to the great spy agitation, and that, if it is at once very patriotic and most amusing for zealous patriots to arrest and hustle every creature who wears fair hair on his face, or shows a light at his bed-room window, it is by no means so entertaining for the object of those attentions. This fact having now been somewhat tardily recognised, there has been quite a revival of the theory that personal liberty ought to be respected, and it is now very near being admitted that, if a man has given no cause whatever for suspicion to the most suspicious patriot, and that if, having nevertheless fallen under suspicion, he can instantly produce a large collection of papers which the patriot happens to understand, and a host of friends whom the patriot happens to know—that then it is very doubtful whether he ought to be dragged through the streets to the guard-house, and helped forward by the butt-ends of ready chassepots. The citizen will probably breathe more freely, but I fear the measure of generosity will not apply to any who may have committed the mistake of being born out of France. Talking of arrests, the new guardians of the peace, who replace the *sergents-de-ville*, have made their appearance in the streets. They are a melancholy race of men, clad in a loose hooded great-coat and cap, with tri-colour rosettes on their breasts, and they walk in groups of three, with an expression of face which shows that they do

not in the least know what they do, or are expected to do, between heaven and earth.

Sept. 26.

Up to this time it would appear that the Prussians have not made great way with their operations. The heights of Châtillon, which they occupy, and on which they have been endeavouring to make batteries, are still as naked as when they were left; for every attempt to work on them has been defeated by the forts of Vanves and Montrouge, which shell everything that moves; and as the artillerists make excellent practice, the Prussians have found the heights much too hot for spade work. The forts have the range of every point for miles round, and the gunners make almost a certainty of everything they see. Even night is now no protection, for the electric light is kept playing over the country, and illuminates it so effectually that nothing can stir without being immediately detected; and as the greatest vigilance is observed, it will scarcely be possible for the enemy to effect a surprise. This vigilance, in fact, is sometimes overdone. Two days ago a wretched *égoutier* working about the sewers was seen by a zealous Guard National, who at once gave an alarm. Three hundred more Gardes Nationaux turned out and stalked the *égoutier*, who was blown to pieces the next time he put his head out of his sewer. The mistake was regretted, but the consolation volunteered on all such occasions is that it is better that a hundred innocent men should suffer than that one Prussian should escape. I, being an innocent, see it in a different light, and should prefer to find less readiness to fall into panic and to shoot without inquiry; all the more so because it seems likely that the siege may last any time, and the opportunity for mistakes be proportionately numerous. The Prussians are throwing up works on the northern side to protect their communications and their

retreat if they are driven to it, while on the plateau of Versailles they are making a regular intrenched camp, in anticipation of attacks from outside. Energetic measures have been taken to secure that such attacks shall be made, and commissioners have been sent into the provinces to raise an army with that object. The rising of the provinces is clearly a matter of the greatest urgency, for without it the defence of Paris would be utterly useless.

The weather here is most delightfully warm and sunny, and the fashion still is to breakfast in the open air. This morning I was waited on by an officer of the Garde Nationale, in full uniform—the master of the restaurant—who had just come off duty. Yesterday there were more of the trivial manifestations with which these heroes amuse themselves. One of them was organised by the Italian Ambulance Corps, who went in state to the Hôtel de Ville, and were received with shouts of "Vive l'Humanité," which was, perhaps, an anachronism at a time and in a place where a million of men are doing all they know to exterminate each other. But the French must be amused. Nor is there any reason why they should not be, if they would only take their amusement and their heroism separately. We are already beginning to find the evenings long, and to sigh for the theatres. I cannot myself see why they should not be opened. A series of patriotic pieces, crammed with high-flown sentiments and written in noble language, such as Victor Hugo's works would furnish, would go a great way towards keeping up the spirit of this impressionable people, and would furnish a much more profitable occupation than listening to and retailing apochryphal accounts of great victories on the boulevards. It seems to me to be absurd as well as useless to cut off all amusement in these low-spirited times. The Prussians will not be kept out by closing the theatres, and if

they are to come in, we may as well amuse ourselves while we can before the arrival of the psalm-singing William. Not but what we do what we can. There are amusements which do not absolutely require a public theatre, and these are pursued with more eagerness than ever. What we in England specially call "virtue," as if there were only one kind, has never had the same excessive worship paid to it here as in cold-blooded, continent London, and just now it is more at a discount than usual. The social code is relaxed by the pressure of the times, there are a vast number of husbands and lovers away to the wars, and I understand from those who are equal to such undertakings that it requires now an exceptionally small endowment of looks and audacity to make a successful impression upon the female heart. The very queerest kinds of *ménages* have established themselves in various parts of the town, and it is pleasing to observe that the necessity for companionship and mutual help is appreciated to an extent which causes an entire disregard of what I believe are called the "adventitious conventionalities" of life.

In other respects the social aspect of Paris has not changed with the actual investiture. Provisions are dearer, and some articles, such as fresh butter and milk, are becoming scarce; but the city continues to live its gay, careless life in the intervals between the fighting. One feature that has become remarkable is that every other shop contains a supply of breastplates of metal or leather, and a brisk trade is being done in them with those fathers of families whom a hard fate has driven into the Garde Nationale.

There must be a large number of people in the world who take no account at all of what is going on in it. Thus I see the usual number of elderly individuals, in equally elderly coats and linen, occupying themselves daily in the

exciting sport of fishing for gudgeon from the quays. They have fished for years under all kinds of *régimes*, without troubling themselves about changes of Government, and probably will continue to fish till the bombs begin to fall about them. Just in the same way there are people who are most indignant that the postal service is not so regular as they have been accustomed to have it; and at the Post-office to-day I saw an old gentleman who was threatening to appeal directly to the "President of the "Republic" for redress. When he had gone, I remarked to the *employé* that the Republic had not yet got a President, at which he smiled, and said that "the gentleman, "no doubt, meant the last Republic," since which, it is to be presumed, he has kept out of the way of news. This evening I met a friend whom I once knew as a famous pillar of the Empire in the dress of the Garde Mobile. Of course, he was exceptionally bitter against the Emperor, and quite determined to die for the Republic. He is a kind of man, I take it, who would die for anarchy if that happened to be the existing system in Paris, which is the beginning and end of all his thoughts, and the mother of all his opinions—wherein he is a type of many. Taking Frenchmen all round, however, there are more who would die for a Republic than for anything else, but they have so little capacity for belief that they hardly believe in dying at all, in spite of the evidence. I am sure there is scarcely a Parisian who really thinks it possible, even now, that a bomb can fall on the sacred boulevards. Projectiles are getting nearer, however, in their course. This evening the Prussians fired a few long shots from the heights of Châtillon, and sent some of them very nearly inside the fortifications—very nearly, but not quite. It is expected that the attack will soon commence, and the spot indicated is the Point du Jour, at the south-western extremity of the city,

where it juts out into a point. I hear from a Franc-tireur, who was taken prisoner a few days since by the Prussians, but escaped just as they were about to shoot him, that while their officers are "superbes" and confident of entering Paris, the men are in the lowest possible spirits, "in "tears all day long," sighing to see the Fatherland once more, and in a starving condition, with scarcely a vestige of clothes to their backs or boots to their feet. This is certainly exaggerated, but it is also certain that the letters found upon the dead and the prisoners are all written in a very desponding tone. The Prussians expected simply to march into Paris. By this time they have found out their mistake, and those able military critics who declared with one accord that "Paris would not hold out three days" will have to reconsider the situation, and perhaps may have a little modesty, or, better still, may be brought to appreciate the necessity of taking into account political as well as military considerations.

CHAPTER VII.

SIEGE LIFE.

Sept. 27.

EXCELLENT news from the provinces. The rumours of messengers having arrived through the Prussian lines have been received with "all reserve," if not with absolute disbelief; but the Government announces officially this morning that a courier has really reached them with despatches from Tours, dated the 24th, and to the news has added the copy of a proclamation issued by the Tours branch of the Executive, in which a succinct account is given of M. Jules Favre's interview with Bismarck, and the country is called to arms. We learn that the army of the Loire is already in existence, and has even had "several slight engage-"ments." All this is very encouraging, as you may imagine, and will rouse the Parisians to fresh exertions.

The quiet which has reigned for the last few days has not been interrupted. I went to-day round the southern and western ramparts by the Chemin de Fer de Ceinture. The elevated viaducts and bridges which carry the line of railway from Vanves over the Seine to the Point du Jour afford an excellent view over the fortifications, of the country, rising gently from the walls to the hills of Châtillon, some three miles off, and farther on of the Park of St. Cloud—a green, leafy height, jewelled with gleaming white houses, every one of which now lodges a detachment of Prussians. There was little apparent in the way of active

hostilities. An occasional puff and boom from the fort of Issy announced the shells with which the gunners "sound "the woods," but that was all. The ramparts wear an air of confident readiness; cannon in position at every embrasure, sentries pacing to and fro, and in some places gangs of labourers putting a finishing touch to new works of defence, of which a large number have been constructed within the past three weeks. The barricades, too, have been begun in earnest, and I saw two of them this morning—formidable constructions, built of wooden logs, reaching to the height of a first-floor window, and capable of being defended against anything by resolute men.

The town was alarmed to-day by the sudden uprising of a curiously dense and compact column of black smoke from the direction of the Buttes Chaumont. Of course, the first idea was that something had been set on fire by a Prussian shell, and the people in the streets began to say, almost with a sense of relief—and, as far as I could judge, without flinching at all—that the real business had at last begun. It seems, however, that it was the store of petroleum which has been placed about the Buttes (inside the city) as a measure of precaution, and which had taken fire from some cause at present unknown, though, of course, the occurrence is attributed to Prussian spies. The petroleum burnt and exploded most fiercely at first, but it was very promptly extinguished with earth by the Gardes Nationaux, who indeed got the fire under before the regular pompiers had time to arrive. The *Soir* announces that all the sentries, and 200 workmen besides, have been arrested and will be tried for having allowed the fire to take place. As another measure of energy twenty-one of those soldiers who were so ill-advised as to run away from the battle at Châtillon were yesterday marched round the ramparts with their hands tied behind their backs, their coats turned

inside out, and then led forth from the Porte Maillot to be shot, which will be a terrible example to their fellows. There are those, however, who maintain that they were not shot at all, but brought back by another gate with their coats turned the right side out. Possibly they were the heroes whom I saw received with cheers on the Place de la Concorde, as having escaped from the Prussians at the risk of their lives. That at least was the account they gave of themselves, and it will do either for deserters or for heroes.

After being so worried by balloons that go off before their time, balloons that burst without going at all, and balloons that have never existed, the English and American newspaper correspondents yesterday took a supreme resolution, and this afternoon I was one of a deputation of four who had an audience of M. Jules Favre, in order to lay the whole matter before him, and to appeal for facilities of correspondence. We were received by the Minister with a readiness which would drive an English private secretary out of his mind, and found him excellently well disposed. We pointed out the desirability of keeping the world informed of what is going on here; and, as I had the honour to be appointed spokesman, I ventured to say that practically we represented the whole civilised world, or at any rate the admittedly impartial portion of it, and that therefore we could fairly ask for special favour. Since then I have grappled with the technicalities of an official letter to the Foreign Minister, written upon his suggestion, and we are now in confident hopes of being included in a most favoured letter clause, which alone can afford a chance of our correspondence reaching its destination. The ordinary letters of the last fortnight are now lying at the Post-office untouched, unless perhaps those of a few enterprising and early worms. I have forwarded letters by

various "peculiar" and very desperate channels, but I fear greatly that they are more likely to end their journey in Berlin than in London.

Sept. 28.

Everything still continues quiet around the defences, the only movement that takes place being the daily engagements of Francs-tireurs at advanced posts. There are rumours that the Prussians have held a council of war, and that they by no means like their position. They are such practitioners of the art of surprise that they are capable of packing up their traps and disappearing altogether at any moment, which would, I am sure, be felt altogether as a disappointment by the people of Paris, who have set their hearts on sustaining at least one serious assault in some shape. Confidence increases daily, and the remark made everywhere is that the first piece of good luck France has had was the rejection by Bismarck of Jules Favre's overtures. "He might have had almost anything, "and now he will get nothing," is repeated everywhere and in every form, and there is not a Frenchman but feels certain now that victory will finally crown the efforts of the country. Paris itself has scarcely as yet felt the siege. Eggs are 6d. each, and butter 8fr. a pound; but bread, meat, and wine are comparatively cheap and plentiful. The sale of meat has been, however, as it was certain to be, affected by the establishment of a maximum price, which the butchers declare does not pay them, and many have in consequence closed their shops. The Government, however, has itself undertaken to supply them with meat, and many of the shops have reopened, though with an insufficient supply, so that the purchasers are only able to buy by waiting their turn, the result of which is that those who come last get nothing at all. I myself saw a *queue* waiting at a butcher's shop this morning—an ominous sign for the

poor, but which, so far as the rich are concerned, merely translates itself into increased charges at the restaurants, where prices have been raised in some instances as much as 25 per cent. The aspect of the capital, however, is as heedless as ever in the careless after-dinner hour, when the bill is paid and the fragrant coffee appears. The boulevard scene does not last so long, but it is as gay and as crowded as in the most peaceful times, and any untravelled Londoner dropping down in the midst of the smiling and laughing throng would think himself in a city illuminated for victory rather than in one cut off from all communication, subjected to martial law, and in hourly expectation of an assault.

The state of siege is brought home to us, however, by the announcement that courts-martial have been established at Vincennes and St. Denis to try, by summary judgment and without appeal, all offences against the military code to which we are all now subject. These courts, composed of "a superior officer and two captains," will deliver and carry out their sentences, which involve death on the spot in every case of condemnation, the knowledge of which will, it is to be hoped, exercise a salutary effect upon the "robbers, marauders, or spies" against whom the measure is declared to be especially directed. In times like these scoundrelism of all kinds is rampant, and the theories of property and of the rights thereto belonging are shaken from without by many a blow, and energetic resistance is an absolute necessity for us who have the misfortune to have aught to lose. Communism and Socialism, which lost the last Republic, are beginning to rear their heads in a menacing way, and sooner or later will have to be dealt with rudely. Thus, last Monday there was a meeting at Belleville, composed of about 3000 citizens, "who "unanimously decided that Mayor Richard of the 19th

"arrondissement is deprived of his functions, and that "Citizen Ranvier is elected in his place, and shall be in- "stalled to-morrow." Having thus disposed of the government of their arrondissement, these citizens proceeded to look after its material interests, and passed this resolution:—"Considering that Godillot, military equip- "ment maker, has been guilty of the crime of high treason "towards the nation in preventing his workmen from per- "forming their duty in the Garde Nationale; and that the "oppression he exercises plunges his workmen in slavery, "misery, and ignorance," the citizens of the 19th and 20th arrondissement in public meeting assembled, declare that— "1. M. Godillot shall be immediately arrested by the "citizens. 2. That his workshop, plant, and stock in trade "shall be appropriated for the benefit of the nation in con- "sideration of an equitable indemnity. 3. The business of "M. Godillot will be carried on by a co-operative associa- "tion of workmen. 4. The indemnity due to M. Godillot "will be paid to him in the form of an annuity deducted "monthly from the product of the labour of the associated "workmen. 5. All these decisions will be submitted to the "sovereign people in public meeting, and will have the "force of law, and be put into execution in the name of the "people when they are adopted. The Provisional Govern- "ment will be informed of them." What do you think of that for a beginning? These amiable citizens, you see, judge and condemn M. Godillot off-hand, without taking the trouble to ask if there is any defence to be made, and incontinently proceed to divide his property. It must read like a scene from a pantomime in property-respecting England; and even here the proceedings of this court of the "sovereign people" is laughed at, just as Bradlaugh and Odger are laughed at with us. But the sovereign people here believes in itself and its principles—which Bradlaugh

and Odger probably do not—and may, if not well handled, insist once more on trying to put them into practice. Then would be renewed the struggle between the Republicans and the Socialists, and Heaven knows where it would end. I fancy, however, that the sovereign people are greatly tamed of late, as large numbers of them have saved enough to make them strongly object to anything like an equal division of property, and if the Government is firm the rock on which previous Republics have split will this time be weathered.

We hear from Tours that "negotiations are being "actively pursued by the neutral Powers." Innocent and confiding neutral Powers! Do they imagine that anything they can do now will have the slightest effect in the world upon the war? If they do, they only exhibit the same blindness to the state of things which has characterised them all through. France is roused now; she will not so much as listen to the idea of negotiation, and any insular or continental Government that tries to play the part of conciliator will find itself received, not with thanks, but with a snub. Why, indeed, should the French negotiate? They are at the lowest rung of the ladder as it is; they have nothing to lose and everything to gain; with the spirit that is in them they will be foolish indeed not to strike a last great and desperate blow for victory. I am, perhaps, over-sanguine, but I was as doubtful as any one at the beginning of the siege. The faith I have is derived from what I have seen and know, and I am strongly impressed with the belief that weak and impotent as the France of a month ago proved, the France of to-day will hold firm.

Religion, although it has been, as I was told yesterday, "nearly made respectable" through the devotion exhibited by the Breton Moblots, is almost in as bad an odour as

property. The churches are empty, their only tenants being a few women who have come to pray for their sons and lovers, and the priests have disappeared almost entirely. The Government has ordered that all churches should bear the inscription, "Liberty, equality, and fraternity"; for the popular symbol, whatever it may happen for the moment to be, is always run to death here. One of the colonels of the *banlieue*, however, it seems, being opposed to all that was not strictly practical, has taken upon himself to modify the inscription on the local church, and to replace it by the words, "Infantry, cavalry, and artillery," in which he declares he places infinitely more trust.

Sept. 29.

People are beginning quite to lose patience with the inaction which has marked the last week, and it is asked whether the 500,000 men who are here mean to let the Prussians winter comfortably at Versailles under their noses. The line of investment cannot in the nature of things be equally strong all round, and it is more than suspected that its weakest part is on the south-eastern side of the city, where, it is said, it would not be difficult to pierce through. I understand, however, that no active steps will be taken by General Trochu until further and more exact intelligence is received of the condition and plans of the Army of Loire. Paris can afford to wait, but cannot afford to throw away a chance by risking anything like a serious engagement. Nevertheless, it is irritating to sit down quietly under a blockade so complete as that which we are enduring, and the Parisians are already becoming *ennuyés* with the dulness of besieged life. Every night the Prussians try to make a battery on some of the heights they occupy, and every morning the forts knock their work to pieces, and scatter their men with shot and

shell. That, with an occasional reconnaissance, constitutes the whole history of the days that we have last passed; and people are asking, with a half-injured air, when the shelling is going to begin. Probably the Parisians ought to be impressed with the gravity of their situation, but they are not so impressed in the least, and the real fact is that there is a probability of the whole thing becoming flat and dull. Even the spy excitement has in a great measure cooled off. The respectable shopkeepers of the National Guard have been rebuked for their absurd suspicion by General Trochu a second time this morning, and it is now almost necessary to be really imprudent in order to get arrested. The postal balloons were a subject of talk when first started; but since it has become known that they invariably arrive safely, and that they are not chased in the air by the Prussians, they are accepted as a commonplace channel of communication, so that the *badauds* are at their wits' end for talk, which they hold to be a sufficient reason why General Trochu should provide them with a serious engagement merely as a subject of conversation. Among the more audacious of the military operations of the last week perhaps the most audacious is that of a body of "three "ladies," who calmly went out one evening and took up their quarters with the Prussians, returning the next day laden with the watches, trinkets, and other objects of value which had been requisitionised from the various towns between this and the German frontier. General Trochu tried to get some information out of these ladies, but found that they told such dreadful "crackers" —and crackers, too, of such utterly opposite character— that he gave it up, and revenged himself by holding them up to public ignominy in an order of the day. There are others who have passed through the Prussian lines on a more useful errand as couriers, and some

of these arrive in Paris almost daily, bringing the best news from the departments. In London, it is rumoured, a great demonstration of 200,000 people has been held in Hyde Park, and resolutions passed advocating the cause of France and the abdication of her Majesty.

The elections for the Constituent Assembly as well as those for the municipality of Paris have been indefinitely postponed, but among the "Terrorists," as they are proud to call themselves, a movement has been begun to bring about the municipal elections at once. The reason given is plausible enough—that as Paris itself is free, and that there is nothing to prevent these elections, they should be carried through at once, so as to regularise things, at any rate, as far as is possible. It would, however, be very dangerous to set up just now a separate municipality of Paris by the side of the existing Government, which in its present state is strong enough and energetic enough to do the work of the capital, as well as so much of the work of the country as it can reach. Were the Commune de Paris formed it would at best but complicate the Executive machinery without strengthening it, and it is possible that between it and the Provisional Government divisions and jealousies would arise which at this time it is essential to avoid. The Government is bound as soon as the country is free enough to act to convoke the Constituent Assembly, and there is no kind of reason to doubt that it will do so; but meantime it should be left unfettered with the fullest power that ought of necessity to accompany the full responsibility with which it is charged. The *Réveil* states that the "Terrorists" declare that the election must take place whether the Government wishes it or not; but these small journalists are known to write with the sole object of bringing themselves forward as candidates at the election

they demand, and the general opinion, which amply endorses the decisions hitherto taken by the Government, has left them high and dry to entertain their own opinions if they like, but without a chance of using them for their own advancement.

CHAPTER VIII.

SORTIE OF CHEVILLY.

Sept. 30.

THE cannon was actively at work from two o'clock this morning till eleven, and in the Place de la Concorde it came distinctly on the air—an uninterrupted succession of low, dull, heavy sounds, which betokened an important engagement. I learnt that fighting was going on at Choisey-le-Roi, and made a vain attempt to get permission to go out of the city, in order to see it, but failed. I took a victoria, at any rate, to the nearest gate on that side—the Porte de la Maison Blanche—but there was nowhere a sign of any movement, except that I saw a wounded soldier of the line borne in by his comrades on a stretcher. From the Maison Blanche I took the railway that runs round the town, but Fort Bicêtre, Fort Vanves, and Fort Issy were all quiet, and by that time the firing had entirely ceased. I learn that the Prussians came up between Forts Ivry and Bicêtre, as well as in front of Fort Montrouge, but that they were driven back with loss. After some time they tried an attack on the western and northern sides, but the fight has apparently been getting farther off from the walls all round, which is, of course, a good sign. It appears that at half-past nine this morning the French troops were in occupation of Chevilly, on the farther side of Villejuif, four miles from the walls, and that they were cannonading Thiais, a suburb of Choisy-le-Roi. This is a further

advance than has yet been made. The Government to-day prescribes a requisition of all wheat and flour now in Paris, which are to be paid for at the prices current during the first fortnight of the present month, and which will be retailed at a given rate, taken as low as possible. The Parisian is very touchy on the matter of food, and he imagines that those who sell it do so in obedience to a law of nature, or the visitation of Providence, which they have no right to shirk. The baker, butcher, and restaurateur are expected to sell their wares always at a low price. This morning, in the Avenue d'Italie, I witnessed a scene which shows how dangerous it is to disappoint the expectation of the sovereign people. A restaurateur was closing his establishment, when the word was passed, and in a couple of minutes a crowd of several hundred patriots surrounded the door, throwing stones at the windows. Talk and threatening, however, last a long time with a French crowd before action begins. I was in a hurry; I merely stayed to see half-a-dozen windows smashed, and left the sovereign people preparing, I was assured, to take the house by assault.

Oct. 1.

It appears that the engagement of yesterday resulted in a considerable amount of slaughter on both sides. The Prussians had fortified Chevilly and Thiais, which it is most important for them to hold in order to protect their convoys of provisions passing through those villages from the east to Versailles. Both villages were carried by assault, and in Thiais was taken one of the enemy's batteries. It was impossible, however, to carry off the cannon from the want of horses; and the Prussians bringing reinforcements, in their turn drove out the French, who, however, retired "in good order," and were not pursued. That is the simple and unvarnished truth of the affair as I have it from an

eye-witness, and it agrees fully with the account given in the *Rapport Militaire* published this morning. All the accounts published by the present Government may, I believe, be relied upon for truthfulness. Certainly up to this time they have shown no kind of disposition to conceal reverses or to magnify advantages. The forts have hitherto done all the work there has been to do, beyond that of reconnaissances, and they have undoubtedly performed excellent service; but the defences of the city itself may at any time be called upon, and no effort is omitted to put them in a state of efficiency. In this, as in other respects, however, there is often more zeal than discretion shown, and Henri Rochefort, as President of the Commission of Barricades, has published a notice to the effect that "a certain number "of citizens," who have been erecting barricades in various parts of the town according to their own sole lights, are doing more harm than good, and that he will be compelled to demolish several of these patriotic constructions, for the simple reason that they obstruct the defence instead of aiding it. Probably, however, the fate of Paris will really be decided outside and not inside the walls.

As far as can be judged, the Prussians intend to sit down as comfortably as may be before the city, and to establish themseves in intrenched positions. M. de Bismarck told M. Jules Favre that "the mob" will open the gates to them even before the last extremity is reached. That he will find himself mistaken in this latter expectation I am convinced; but with an army which, like that of Paris, it would be dangerous to manœuvre in the open before an able enemy, the starvation plan will possibly end by succeeding, unless succour should come in time. That succour is indeed, as I have already pointed out, a necessary element in the scheme of defence, and to my mind the final question rests still with the provinces, who, if they

do but their duty, can make it impossible for the Prussians to maintain the investment. You in England will probably, therefore, be much better able to calculate the probabilities of the situation than those who are shut up here; but Paris can hold out with ease for two or three months at the least, and if in that time the provinces do nothing it will be strange indeed, and France will deserve her fate.

I had an interview this morning with M. Jules Favre, who bears the stamp of a remarkable man upon him. He has all the simplicity of the Republican, and yet, at the same time, all those fascinating manners of the highly-bred gentleman which are so rarely met with. I may say, without indiscretion, that the Government attaches great importance to the attitude of England, and hopes for her sympathy and moral support in the trials through which the country is passing; though it would appear to share the disappointment expressed throughout French society at the coldness, not to say gratification, with which the English Cabinet and a part of the English Press have looked on while France has been engaged in a struggle for mere existence. A great distinction is taken between the situation which existed before, and that which was created after, Sedan. The conduct of the English Government from the beginning of the war up to the capitulation was not only justifiable but dignified, and the French do not conceal that they had brought the disasters upon themselves which culminated at Sedan. But with the Emperor a prisoner, the French armies destroyed, all idea of conquest renounced, and France offering to make the heaviest sacrifices for peace, the situation was entirely changed, and the French cannot believe that a nation can be friendly to them which forbore to step in as it might have done at that critical moment, and put a stop to the

war. The inaction of England is construed as a sign of ill-will, and of secret satisfaction at the project of the dismemberment of France. It is not made a grievance, but it will be remembered, and it will do much to revive the popular distrust of England. It will almost certainly produce as its first fruits the revocation of the Commercial Treaty, and if ever we should want the assistance of France in the East or elsewhere it will in all probability prevent us from obtaining that assistance. English statesmen may talk and write, and English journals may show conclusively that we have done all we could do; but a people in the dire peril that France is passing through only feels and does not reason, and the one thing they assert is that their old allies have deserted them as they deserted the United States in the hour of need. Louis Blanc publishes this morning an "address to the English "people," in which he strikes a somewhat different note, and portrays with energy (though not in the happiest style) the spectacle of King William refusing peace, refusing indemnity, and marching on to Paris with an appeal to "the God of armies" to assist him in its spoliation. He then points out the danger there is for Europe in the aggressive spirit of Prussia—a danger which, I should imagine, must have now been brought home to the intelligence of most purblind statesmen—and claims for his country the sympathy and support of the English people, as they love justice and abhor tyranny.

The Prussians affect a great respect for the laws of war, but it is nevertheless a fact that about Paris they are daily guilty of acts that would disgrace savages. I have forborne from transmitting the accounts of alleged atrocities in remote districts, having no means of ascertaining even approximately what amount of truth there might be in them; but I have the best evidence that around Paris they are

exercising the most unjustifiable cruelties upon the unarmed population of the towns and villages. Their requisitions succeed each other daily; but, as the country had already been nearly cleared before they arrived, it is often impossible to furnish the supplies they demand. When that is the case they almost invariably shoot or hang the person on whom the requisition has been made; and, if it is made upon a town, they shoot the mayor. No less than four such functionaries have already been thus murdered in cold blood, and only three days ago, at Versailles, a wine merchant named Chevereuse and two provision dealers were killed in the same way.

Sunday, Oct. 2.

I fear from what I hear this morning that the situation is much less calculated to inspire confidence than has hitherto been believed in Paris. The capital itself is as determined as ever, and the fighting of the last few days has done much to raise the spirits and to improve the *morale* of the troops. The enormous daily drain upon the provisions has as yet scarcely been felt, and the prospect of successful resistance has, if anything, improved. But in the nature of things that resistance can only be maintained for a certain time, since it is of a purely passive character, with scarcely a chance of being made active unless aided by energetic co-operation from without. Paris must fall unless it is succoured—it is merely a question of time; nor is there any kind of reason why it should not fall if there is nothing behind it to fall back upon. The provinces have been confidently reckoned upon, as they might fairly be, for it was scarcely reasonable to suppose that they would fail when it was a question of maintaining the last barrier to the dismemberment and humiliation of their country. But it would seem that, either from the want of energy on the part of M. Crémieux, from that fear

of the Reds which the peasantry have always associated with a Republic, from provincial jealousy of the capital, from Orleanist lukewarmness, from Legitimist intrigue, or from all these causes acting together, the provinces have practically done, and are practically doing, nothing; and that, so far as appears at present, Paris is likely to be left to its fate. It appears that the Army of the Loire can scarcely be said to exist, and that the engagement at Etampes, as to the result of which the Government has been discreetly silent, but which has been announced by several journals to have resulted in a glorious victory, really ended in a very disastrous defeat; while Tours itself, instead of being a centre of patriotic action, is being made the scene of Legitimist writings. As bad news never comes single, I learn also that Strasburg has fallen—an event which has, it is true, been daily expected, but which just now comes as a heavier blow thus accompanied. The only piece of intelligence which is considered encouraging is that a great demonstration was held in London last Friday, when there was expressed the strongest sympathy for France, and the strongest disapproval of the course the English Government had taken.

Such is the budget of news brought by a courier from Tours, who left that town yesterday, and arrived here through the Prussian lines a few hours ago. The intelligence he has brought is kept a profound secret at present, and will probably not leak out for a day or two at least, if at all; but when it is known it will produce a profound discouragement, which may take any kind of wild form. If this account is anything like the truth, if Paris must really renounce all idea of being effectually seconded by the provinces, then it is worse than useless to continue passive resistance, and there only remains one of two courses open—viz., to make as soon as possible a last

desperate sortie, and attack with every available man and gun the Prussians before they are finally established in their positions and can get all their heavy artillery up; or else to open again negotiations for peace, and accept any condition King William may choose to offer. Of the two the latter course would, I believe, be the wiser, but we are in the hands of desperate men. General Schmitz told me yesterday that the chiefs are resolved to bury themselves and the population under the ruins of Paris rather than submit, and in this he was but an echo of the language held everywhere, and not held lightly either by those in authority. Still more desperate and resolved, if possible, are the lowest and poorest classes, who will, I believe, defend Belleville and the companion quarters of the town to the very last extremity, even if all the rest is taken and held by the Prussians. The *bourgeoisie*, remembering as they do their wives and families, and their sacred property, are by no means of that way of thinking; but "on les fera marcher quand même," as a workman said to me yesterday; and desperate counsels are likely to prevail, even if and when there is nothing to be gained from them. The Prussians (who, by the way, I am sorry to learn are not starving at all, but very well off for provisions) are probably well aware of this, and would in all likelihood be more ready to make peace now; but I do not think it would be possible for the Government so much as to make overtures, and I fear that in any case we shall have a desperate carnage before the siege of Paris is ended.

The French will always have a hero and a victim of the moment; for now the hero is General Uhrich, and it makes one really angry to see the Gardes Nationaux, who ought to be occupied with real work, passing their time in making childish processions to the Strasburg statue, and covering it with artificial flowers and doggrel verses in his honour.

The victim is the fallen Emperor, who is visited every morning with some new and revolting caricature, in which the entire absence of humour is made up for by bald obscenity. The Government, the journals, and all men that have utterance in any way, continue to throw also their stones at the fallen ruler. The wildest form of reproach is that he is the sole and only author of the war which has afflicted France with such dire misfortune. So forgetful are Frenchmen of the past, that the whole tone of public opinion for the last four years is ignored, and all people profess to believe that the war was a conception of the Emperor's sole brain, carried into effect by his sole will against the wishes of the country. In support of this view, the *Journal Officiel* of to-day publishes the reports which were transmitted by the Prefects of all the Departments of France to the Minister of the Interior, in answer to his request made on the 6th July last for information as to the state of opinion with regard to the prospect of war. I have read all these reports, and they one and all amount to this —that the people regarded war as a curse, and wished for peace, but that if war was seen to be necessary they would be enthusiastic in supporting it. The Government appears to imagine that these documents show that France was dragged into the war; but to my mind they prove, on the contrary, that the Emperor was encouraged and supported to the full in the warlike declarations which he had already made through the mouth of M. de Gramont, and which these reports seem fully to endorse. For the moment, however, it really matters nothing whatever who began the war, and there is something childish, as well as something utterly ungenerous and mean, in the attempt to repudiate all responsibility for it. The conclusive answer to all such attempts may always be made, that as the French chose to allow the Emperor

to manage their affairs, they must take the consequences of the present war.

Oct. 3.

We have now been living upon ourselves, both physically and morally, for sixteen days, but, unless through a few novel social incidents, the siege is scarcely to be felt. A friend has turned up in a promiscuous, beleagured sort of way, and has come to share my lodgings and to relieve with *his* society the tedium of waiting for the bombs. We neither of us have got any money left, but we propose to support each other by our mutual credit, to fish each other out of the prison that yawns in the mouth of every Garde Nationale, and to share our last rat together. Meantime we are not greatly to be pitied. Our joint domestic, Jean, one of those handy creatures yet to be invented in England, makes our beds, scrubs the floor, brushes the clothes, cooks like a *cordon bleu*, and is, as we believe and fervently hope, capable of producing any explanation or invention that may be required by persons in search of payment. He has been especially successful as regards meat. The article is scarce and hardly to be got now, but Jean gets up at five o'clock, and throws himself out as a detachment to the butcher, whom he takes by surprise, and from whom he always returns with trophies long before the main attack has commenced. Yesterday we named him in orders for a wonderful feat—no less a one than that of bringing in under convoy half a pound of fresh butter—the very last half-pound in Paris, besides three eggs, only two of which were decidedly uneatable. We are invited out to-morrow to a fine joint of horse, which will last us for some time.

England is represented in Paris by a small, but by no means compact, body of newspaper correspondents, who are very much put out at not being allowed outside the gates. The *Daily News* especially feels the lack of excite-

ment, and probably will let off his indignation all round, as will also the *Daily Telegraph*, both of whom have a very poor opinion of the Paris grocer who has undertaken to defend the capital. The *Times* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* take a slightly more lively view of matters, but are somewhat affected by the bad news from the provinces. The Parisians themselves are a poor and flabby people, full of childish tricks and windy bombast, but without anything like fibre in their composition. By themselves they must come to grief; and their fate is really in the hands of the country outside, which is apparently not moving at all as one would expect.

A CANTINIERE.

CHAPTER IX.

FRIVOLITY.

Oct. 27.

I AM beginning now to think that the defence of Paris will figure in history rather as an absurd caricature than the serious effort of serious men. Were any future historian to be shut up with no other materials than the accounts of the Parisians themselves, he would be lost in astonishment and admiration at their heroic resolutions and astounding efforts, though he might, as he read on, be somewhat startled to come upon no tangible results such as effort and heroism might be expected to produce.

But those who are actually on the spot, and competent to appreciate the situation, and observe what is actually being done, must testify that, in presence of the danger that menaces them, the Parisians have hitherto been so utterly trivial that it has become quite sickening to put their words side by side with their acts. They will die on the ramparts. They will bury themselves beneath the ruins of Paris. They will astonish the world, we are told every day, and yet here they still sit with folded arms, 500,000 men with rifles and bayonets in their hands, not daring to strike a blow. Even their purely defensive works are ridiculous. They make holes and fill them with spikes; sow their ramparts with nails, points upwards, and propose even to cover them with broken glass, as if the Prussians were so many cats. But it is only a small number who even do

so much as this; the rest simply go on eating and drinking as usual, and the only sign they show of the gravity of their situation is to make childish processions to the Strasburg statue, and to repeat in various tones the official and journalistic declarations that they will "bury themselves "beneath the ruins of the city."

Seeing Paris so utterly enervated and futile, it is not wonderful that the provinces will not move. It is pretty well established that up to this time they have done nothing whatever; and as the defence of Paris is solely of use, if at all, to give the provinces time to rise, it is clear that if no help is to come from them peace had better be made at once, and at any price. To remain here as we do, shut up like rats in a pit, until we are starved out, which of course is a mere matter of time, would be utterly absurd and useless; and if there is still anything like a determination left to resist the dismemberment of France, the one thing to be done is to make a desperate sortie in force. If the result were disastrous, there would be an end of the matter, and a better and more honourable end than that of a starved-out capitulation; if it were successful, the situation would be immensely improved, the provinces would be roused, and France might yet retrieve her position. At present Paris, which pretends to believe that it is heroic, is simply a ridiculous and painful spectacle of childish effort and bluster. There is a great want of cannon and shot, and yet at this very time, when every foundry should be engaged in making up the deficiencies, they are about to suspend the works in order to cast a bronze statue of Strasburg. Nothing could paint the character of the people better than this incident.

In good truth, it makes me sick at heart to see these Frenchmen. I had hoped and believed that they would not shame their race and their country, but would stand

fast, and show themselves worthy sons of the fathers who fought so well for the great cause of humanity. I have struggled hard against the painful impression of their triviality and want of earnestness, and swaggering bombast, and have held fast to the belief that the old spirit was beneath, and would at the last assert itself. But I have now lost all confidence and all hope. A people taken thus by the throat, who will not arouse themselves to make the last desperate struggle, must be dead already; and it seems to me that I now see only the ghost of what once was France. Brave and true and honest men there are, God knows, among her sons; but are they so few that they cannot transfuse one spark of living energy into their country—no, not even energy enough to strike a last blow for mere existence? I think, if I were a Frenchman, I should never dare face the day and say that I was one of such a people—that I should fly to the uttermost ends of the earth and hide myself from the shame of it. Alas! for this once noble race of men! Are they, indeed, become utterly corrupt and weak? Are the grand traditions, the noble thoughts, and high aspirations that once were theirs lost for ever? Are they who lay claim to the heritage of giants indeed convicted as mannikins, who so ignobly fall into shame and slavery that there shall be found none to sorrow for them, and that even we who have loved them shall turn away with contempt? I fear, indeed, that it is so, and that the glory of France is on the point of dying out without even an expiring flicker to promise future resurrection.

Why, then, what boots it to defend Paris? Why cut short the play of cup-and-ball and the ready laugh? Why stay the flow of wine, the lust of the flesh, and the cycle of the fashions? These are the things that really are important in the eyes of *gandins* and shopkeepers. Why then

play such heavy stakes against a mere bauble like honour or nationality? Is it worth while to kill a few poor Moblots, who, maybe, really believe in baubles, in order to gain for the Parisian the credit of believing in them, he, meantime, believing in nothing? Bah! Make peace—make any peace, and that quickly, lest William be angry, and, perchance, knock enough gilding off Paris to make chambering inelegant for a fortnight. What matters? If France is dead, why be careful about Paris? Rather agree with the adversary quickly, that he leave at any rate enough wine and women for those who happen to be yet here; for should he lay hands on those every Frenchman who respects himself would be constrained to follow even to Berlin. Leave, then, the "heroic defence." Restrain the courage that prompts these thousand patriots to face the fearful odds of one simple creature suspected of being a Prussian spy. Curb the contempt of death which leads you to go forth in your thousands to hang your faded wreaths on the Strasburg statue; stay the zeal that impels your National Guard to slumber in a full guard-house over an empty bottle, and to turn out only three hundred strong to shoot an *égoutier;* no longer render the walls impregnable with tin-tacks and glass bottles; print no more of those heroic resolutions to bury yourselves beneath the ruins which have so terrified the enemy; cast no more bronze statues; break no more eagles; defend Paris thus heroically no longer, but let in the pious William, who will treat you as the God of Battles may prompt him, and as your bravery will deserve. There are a few workmen and soldiers who will make faces—perhaps make barricades, and possibly fight desperately to the last—but when once William is in the town that will be his affair, as it once was Napoleon's—as it may be anybody's who chooses to take you by the neck. Bismarck will open the Post-office,

and set the railways running to bring you from afar the delicacies of which you are now deprived. Probably he will not object to the practice and publication of obscenities, which are necessaries of life for you. Eat, and drink, and be merry; and let those who lament the shame of their country go to other climes, where patriotism is still more than a word, and where men are still to be found.

Meantime, stop chattering for very shame. Leave the idea that blustering words can cover your disgrace. The world listens and smiles; the Prussians do not even listen, but come steadily and surely up to your walls. Stand aside, then, *braillards* and howlers, and if there are still a few strong arms and stout hearts among you, make room, that they may, if it be so, strike one last blow to show that the memory of what France was is not utterly lost!

The authorities are too frightened of their own soldiers to give passes to correspondents; but they are like all other authorities I have ever met, and it is better to rely upon oneself alone for anything one wishes to do. Giving up, therefore, all attempts in that direction, I this morning, at eleven o'clock, started with a French friend who possesses a military pass for a reconnaissance outside the walls, and as the cannon were thundering when we set out we expected to see some active operations. At any rate, we proposed to go to Villejuif and see for ourselves the battle-field of the 30th September, and the positions that the French had won; so we left by the Porte de la Maison Blanche, whence the road runs in a straight line past the Fort of Bicêtre to Villejuif, some two miles and a half distant from the walls.

At the gate our one pass was closely scrutinised, and as this is the most critical moment of all we were rather nervous, but we were allowed to proceed, and at once stepped out with a will (for we were on foot) into the open

country—open indeed, for every house had been razed within 500 yards of the ramparts, and all the trees cut down. Beyond this limit there still stand clusters of habitations, but all closed, though some of their owners were still hanging about. Here and there a few women and children were to be seen, and in the middle of the road squads of Gardes Mobiles were still strugging with the goose-step in their preliminary drill. At the turning which leads to Fort Bicêtre on the right we were stopped by a gendarme, who, however, allowed us to go on upon seeing that we had got the correct blue seal, and then we began to mount the ascent that leads into Villejuif, which stands on the top of a respectable height, one of the chain which extends all around the southern and western sides of Paris. Halfway up, however, we were stopped by another guard of Moblots, the sergeant in charge of which was sharp enough to detect that our pass was only for one, and therefore ruthlessly sent us back to the fort to get it *visé*. We came thus again upon our friend the gendarme, who smiled grimly, saying he knew that it would be so, and were by him directed to the hospice where the staff is established. It is a large rambling building, evidently an old monastery, with spacious courtyards and cool corridors, such as the monks loved, in one of which we found a rough office fitted up, and some officers, who to our delight made no difficulty in giving us on the back of our pass for one a *visé* for two, authorising us to go to Villejuif this day only.

Again we mounted the hill, and this time were allowed to pass freely. From this point not a creature was to be seen on the road, except a few soldiers and an occasional orderly going at a hard gallop, with his toes stuck out, his legs well forward, and holding on hard to his reins, as is the manner of French cavalry. On either side the road the trees were all down and lying across the path, and as

we looked back we saw that the object of this was to give Fort Bicêtre, which frowned naked and smooth-shaven below us, a free range across the country. Soon we entered Villejuif itself. Every house was closed, not so much as a cat was to be seen, and over all there lay a dead silence, broken only now and then by the distant boom of the cannon from behind, or the crack of the chassepot in front. As we drew on the desolation became more oppressive; but at length we came upon a cross-street, and a crowd of soldiers of the line, some lying down on straw scattered over the pavement, others making the afternoon soup, and others again chasing each other in sport round the place, while two were trundling hoops in the greatest glee in a race of a novel kind. Just beyond was a barricade across the street, and the inevitable sentry, with his inevitable friends, whom our pass so much impressed that they one and all saluted us militarily, the sentry presenting arms, under the impression, apparently, that we were generals out on a reconnaissance. At this point the traces of the fight were plainly visible. The trees in the gardens, which abound here, as they do in all the suburban towns, were cut freshly off by bullets, and several houses showed yawning holes in their roofs where the shells had fallen. Another barricade, yet another, and then we came upon the end of the village, closed by a fourth, which was occupied by a strong guard—the advanced post, in fact, who were extremely civil, and voluntered to let us into their house to see the Prussians from the top. Such a house! A mere peasant's cottage of two stories and a garret—such a one as would lodge a small family, but now filled at least with a hundred soldiers of the line, who literally paved the courtyard, so that it was difficult to step over them, sleeping, talking, making soup, and indulging in various kinds of horseplay, which seemed to afford the most intense

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amusement—all simple, gay creatures, careless enough of to-day, and not careful at all for to-morrow. The house was a very picture of war. The walls were pierced with innumerable holes, some made by shots, others broken through by way of *meurtrières*. In one room lay a pile of broken furniture, layers of straw, heaps of arms, and on an old chest of drawers a Prussian helmet, which my companion bought for four francs. Through the holes in the walls, looking along the road, we could see Chevilly, strongly barricaded, and every now and then a Prussian sentry would show himself, or several others would run across from cover to cover. No attention seemed to be paid by either side to the other, and while we were there not a shot was fired.

Thence we walked through the village to its western side. Everywhere the same silence. Some of the doors were open, and we peered in curiously, only to see rooms stripped of their furniture, or gardens and poultry yards uncultivated and untenanted. The doors of some of the better houses bore sometimes an inscription, "Logement du capitaine de la lère compagnie du 2me battaillon," and on the closed shutters was generally chalked some such sentiment as "Mort aux Prussiens," or "Deux têtes pour trois sous—Bismarck et Guillaume." On every side were marks of the fight—great holes in the roof, and deep clean chips cut out of the walls. The church had received a shell in its steeple, leaving a hole big enough for a man to walk through. The cemetery we found filled with soldiers encamped among the graves; some of them engaged in hanging out their washing on the tombs to dry alongside of immortelles which spoke of the tender affections of peace. The wall was pierced with loop-holes and lined with sentries, and here, too, we saw several Prussians across the open. Thence we went to the

Hautes Bruyères, a higher hill won from the Prussians on the 30th, and now strongly fortified. All below lay Paris, gleaming in the autumn sun, in its midst the dome of the Invalides rising like a golden globe, and just in front of it the low level lines of Fort Bicêtre. Looking outwards stretched the smiling, glowing country, marked a mile off by Chevilly, where the Prussian sentries could be seen pacing to and fro, their bayonets catching now and then a gleam from the sun. On every side lay marks of the fight—here a deep trench, partly filled up with new earth, surmounted by crosses, telling of the brave men that lay beneath; there a deep new hole made by the explosion of a shell; all about earthworks hastily thrown up and marking the line of the battle. We picked up several fragments of bombs, and spoke to several soldiers, all of whom were fat and healthy, and seemed in the best of spirits and full of confidence.

Oct. 6.

The extraordinary weakness of the Government is becoming more and more apparent daily. They dare not even think of taking any initiative of their own, and they are blown about by every wind of doctrinè. They can be relied upon to adopt almost any suggestion that the *habitués* of the clubs or the writers in the newspapers may choose to make, but they seem to be utterly incapable of any action of their own. It is not necessary to point out that in the present state of things this exaggerated fear of assuming responsibility is one of the greatest danger for the country, and especially for Paris, which requires now rather to be governed with the strong arm than with a discreet hand. The Government, however, with the best intentions, and although there is unbounded confidence in it, has no confidence in itself, but sways and rocks about in a very dangerous way, leaning now to this side, now to

that, as the impulsion may be given. It has no settled policy or plans, but lives from hand to mouth, striving to digest any food that may be presented to it. One day it decrees the municipal elections, the next countermands them. Now it orders cannon to be cast, and anon revokes the order. Its military action is still more feeble; the order of the day is inaction, absolute and undisturbed. But if, as was the case on the 30th, it is induced to take an active step, it is taken in a timid, halting manner, which invites failure. A few more men and a little more determination on the part of the chiefs would probably have made the engagement at Chevilly result in a brilliant and substantial success; but the authorities had not made up their minds whether they intended to make a simple reconnaissance or to engage in a serious struggle, the consequence of which was that they reaped the benefits of neither and the disadvantages of both.

The more advanced and violent politicians—the "Ter-"rorists," as they call themselves—are not slow to observe the failings of the Government. They have up to this time behaved extremely well, as, indeed, have all parties in the city, and have entirely put aside their own aims and objects in order to aid in the great task of the defence of Paris, and to that purpose have honestly and loyally stood by the men in power. Their patience, however, is becoming exhausted at every timid step the Government takes; at every doubt and indecision they recall the ruthless, effective action of '93, and ask whether it is really expected that the country can be saved by vacillation and the sprinkling of rose-water. The truce of parties which has subsisted since the 4th of September, although it has not yet been broken, threatens to expire; and unless the Government can pluck up energy, and show itself equal to its responsi-

bilities, the question may shortly suggest itself whether there is not a stronger system to be found, and hardier men forthcoming to carry it out. At present the want of confidence translates itself into nothing more than suggestions and petitions, though the latter sometimes take an abnormally decided and vigorous form. Thus, Gustave Flourens, one of the most prominent leaders of the advanced Democrats, who has been foremost in insisting upon the necessity of union, and who commands a legion of the National Guard, went yesterday, at the head of five battalions, armed and 5000 strong, to the Hôtel de Ville, where he solemnly required of the Government four things:—1. That the National Guards who wish to make sorties should be armed with chassepots. 2. That numerous sorties shall be made. 3. That commissioners shall be sent into the departments to make a levy *en masse*. 4. That the municipal elections shall take place at once. After this manifestation a meeting was held at the Salle de Ba-ta-clan, when M. Ledru-Rollin made one of his most brilliant speeches, and proposed that another manifestation should be made to-day, that the Government should be required to hold the elections at latest on Sunday or Monday next, and that in case of refusal the people should themselves proceed to elect their municipal council.

The prospect is not a pleasant one, and this morning the Government, through the *Journal Officiel*, appeals to the spirit of order and discipline of the Parisians to put an end to all armed manifestations whatever. Probably it would have been better to say boldly that they would not be allowed, for in this country those who sit in high places must govern, and not appeal to the people, if it would be respected. As it is, however, public opinion is decidedly on the side of the Government, for it is easy to see that the erection of a Commune in Paris by the side of the

Ministers would be a danger and a mistake, and that, at any rate, it is insufferable that such menaces should be made as that of demonstrations with arms in their hands. The Citoyen Flourens has, it is said, resigned his command in consequence of the unfavourable reception with which his demands were met; but he himself only a few days ago forbade his men to make armed demonstrations, and a large number of his officers and men have protested against his proceedings of yesterday. A little good news or a little successful action would be the best rampart the Government could have against the doubters, and would enable it to keep that popularity which is now slightly imperilled.

The fashion just now is for everyone who can gain the opportunity of speech of any kind to make an "appeal." Thus Louis Blanc has made a sympathetic appeal to the English, which certainly will not elicit any sensible response. Victor Hugo has made a poetic appeal to the Parisians in his grandest language, and with his most striking epigrams; and now Edgar Quinet makes a practical appeal to the provinces, in which he points out that they are required by law to organise their Mobiles and National Guards, and to make a levy *en masse* of all the men there is left; in short, that they are bound to bring at least 700,000 troops to the succour of the capital. That, no doubt, is so. But what if they will not come? It is hardly possible to believe it, and yet I am assured that the provinces are doing practically nothing. Meantime the Parisians are vapouring and throwing flowers, and casting the statue of Strasburg in bronze; and between these France is on the point of perishing as a nation.

The evening papers contain a despatch received by the Government at twelve o'clock to-day from Tours, which states that "La province se lève et se met en movement,

les départments s'organisent," and that all the able-bodied men are trooping in to the cry of "Sus à l'ennemi, guerre à outrance." This sounds well, but it is absolutely vague, and may mean anything or nothing. The *Gaulois* has received a copy of the *Journal de Rouen* of the 30th, and this contains more detailed news, among other items the decree for putting into effect the levy *en masse*, and an extract from the *Morning Post* of the 29th September, relating to the armaments and designs of Russia, who appears to be about to put into execution her share of a Russo-Prussian league, such as has long been suspected to exist, and thus finally to unveil the unholy schemes in which this war has really originated.

So far as France is concerned the interest of the struggle now centres in the provinces, and if the news received here continues to be good I shall not be surprised to see an effort made to shake off trifling and inaction, and to assume an offensive attitude, which, again, will react encouragingly upon the country outside. Paris at present is simply eating itself out under the protection of the forts, and its daily life is still scarcely changed. Beef and mutton are getting, not dearer, for they are sold under a compulsory tariff, but harder to come at, and horse is looking up wonderfully under the strongest official recommendation; so much so that, while the ordinary Parisian consumption is ten a-day, it has now risen already to 273 a-day! As for fresh butter and eggs, we carefully preserve the remembrance of them, for we get nothing more, but vegetables are still plentiful. In short, for people fairly well off the siege has up to this time scarcely brought any hardship beyond that of enforced economy and a restriction of suburban excursions. The poor are badly off, since there is no work to do, but most of them are in the National Guard or the Mobiles, and the 30 sous a-day which they get for their

services is sufficient, if laid out at the Government canteens which have been established all over the town, to keep them in comparative luxury. So far as food is concerned, Paris can hold out for almost any time, for although meat may fail there is bread and wine enough for any time, and any amount of vegetables to be got from the *banlieue*. The absence of news, when once accepted as inevitable, is really rather a blessing than otherwise to private persons. It saves one from worrying oneself to make plans, and from anxiety to know how they succeed, and the only real annoyance it produces is that which is caused by the reflection that, as the investment must end sooner or later, a day will come when we shall all be overwhelmed with accumulated letters, requiring probably thought and answers.

The weather has turned quite cold and foggy to-day, which is all the more striking as there was a broiling sun yesterday.

CHAPTER X.

DEMONSTRATION.

Oct. 7.

More demonstrations! There have been three made to-day at the Hôtel de Ville, all of which were failures. M. Blanqui, who wished to follow up the Flourens demonstration of yesterday, scarcely got 100 Gardes Nationaux together in the Cour des Miracles, and had to abandon his project altogether. The Comités d'Armament, however, had an interview with M. Jules Favre through their delegates, and their demand that the municipal elections should be held at once drew from him the answer "that the opinion of the Government as well as that of the majority of the citizens is not favourable to the measure, but may be modified if petitions are produced signed by a sufficient number, and presented in a peaceable manner, without revolutionary preparations." The third demonstration was at once the strangest and the most practical of all. It was composed of 200 women and girls, in the midst of whom marched a splendid creature, recalling Théroigne of famous memory—a tall, dark-eyed, black-haired woman, endowed with that wealth of beauty rarely found but among the labouring classes. She carried the white flag with the red cross, and marshalled her feminine battalion like a military commander. Henri Rochefort received these ladies, who asked that all the able-bodied men at present attached to the ambulances should be drafted into more

appropiate employment as Gardes Nationaux, and that the work they are supposed to be doing should be handed over to the women of Paris. They were told that their request should be considered, and thereupon retired, having at least made a sensible suggestion. It is, indeed, by no means a creditable spectacle to see the crowds of stout young fellows, whose proper place is in the active army, who have neutralised themselves by assuming the Geneva cap and armlet; and it will probably produce a good effect to know that the women are determined to drive them to the front.

A demonstration of another kind has been made by the Corps Diplomatique. They had asked M. de Bismarck to allow them to send couriers to their Governments twice a week, to which the Prussian Chancellor replied that he would allow it, but only on condition that they sent their despatches open. The request itself was perhaps not a reasonable one; but the answer was too insolent a snub. Mr. Washburn holds that the refusal to allow inviolable passage to the couriers of neutral Powers amounts to a violation of the law of nations, and is of opinion that the strongest protest should be made against it. His view is shared to a greater or less extent by all the accredited representatives of foreign Powers still remaining here, and they have drawn up an energetic protest, which is to be sent out to M. de Bismarck to-morrow. Mr. Wodehouse, who has been left here simply in charge of the Embassy and of British subjects, has not thought himself warranted in joining in this action, as indeed there is no reason that he should, since Lord Lyons is at Tours, holding free communication on all material subjects with his Government.

Oct. 8.

The military history of the siege so far has varied but

little from day to day. Every night the Prussians are said to construct works for their artillery on the outlying heights—notably at the Lanterne de Diogène in the park of St. Cloud, and on the hills of Brimborion—and every morning their works are said to be knocked to pieces by the fire of the forts, admirably well served by the sailors who man them. Yesterday, however, there was a series of more active operations. Three or four reconnaissances were made in different directions, which showed that the Prussians are drawing back rather than advancing. Thus on the eastern side they have been driven out of Joinville le Pont into Champigny, and a French detachment which issued from Fort Nogent on the other side the Marne pushed as far as Neuilly-sur-Marne without seeing a helmet, while on the southern side the village of Cachan, close to Villejuif, has been cleared of them and occupied again by General Vinoy.

An important step has also been taken with a view of raising the provinces. Yesterday M. Gambetta, the Minister of the Interior, went out in a special balloon, taking with him a proclamation (written in the usual style of heroic epigram), and charged with the mission of turning the spirit of the country into armies of succour, for which task he is certainly better fitted than M. Crémieux.

Paris as yet hardly feels the siege. There is hardly anything run out in the way of food except fresh fish and fresh butter. We shall, however, be put upon rations very shortly. A notice is published this morning that on and after Monday next the daily supply of fresh meat will be fairly divided among the twenty arrondissements of Paris according to their respective populations, the amount daily killed for the total consumption being from 350 to 400 head of oxen, and from 3000 to 4000 sheep. The distribution to the consumer is to be organised by the mayors of each

arrondissement, who are authorised to apply a system of rations in their districts—a step which, indeed, some of them have already taken. We shall therefore very soon have to share equally all round, which will be no great hardship if the machinery of distribution is well and sufficiently contrived. Another sign of the times is a decree fixing a *taxe*, or maximum price, for horse meat, which has hitherto been exempt from official interference. The best portions of a horse are to be charged 1fr. 40c. the kilogramme (or about 6½d. a lb.), and all the inferior portions 80c. the kilogramme. Fresh meat is the only article of food likely to come to an early end, for there are ample supplies of everything else, and besides the enormous public stores of bread, wine, and preserved provisions, most people have laid in a private supply of them to meet the last eventualities.

The question of the municipal elections is still the chief subject of interest, and up to this time it has been discussed on the whole in a very calm and creditable manner, with far less heat and violence than would be displayed in London were the sacred corporation of the City under consideration. The French appear to have learnt considerable self-control from adversity, and to be deeply impressed with the paramount necessity of political union in the presence of the enemy. Even the public meetings which daily take place are quite calm and self-possessed, contrasted with those which I have attended under the Empire; and, above all, a most remarkable change has come over the tone of newspaper writing. It is, of course, highly heroic, not to say bombastic, and equally, of course, full of attempts at antithesis and epigram where sober argument would be more in place; but it has gained enormously in point of decency, and the reader is not now repelled by disgust at every second line. I fancy the omission of the signature, a change now almost

universally adopted, has had a good effect. It increases the sense of responsibility, for the writer now feels that it is not he alone who is answerable for his article, but the whole collection of opinions and interests forming the paper. If he does not feel it, the editor does for him, and thus a much more serious and responsible tone is adopted.

The Government has, however, to-day struggled into a resolution which will certainly try the decency of MM. Deleschuze, Felix Pyat, Blanqui, and other journalists of the like sort; for they announce that they have finally decided to "postpone the municipal elections till the siege is raised." It is a pity they did not come to this decision at first, for it is their irresolution and change of plans, or rather their want of any fixed plan at all, that has led to and encouraged the agitation; and now that the Radicals are aroused it will be difficult to appease them. The Parisians are a people so easily excited that a prolonged struggle of this kind might at any moment be caused by a chance scuffle resulting in a chance shot; but all the real strength of the city is with the Government in this instance, and the Reds are so conscious of their own comparative weakness that, unless some unforeseen accident should arise, they will not, I think, venture to question the decision of the Ministry, backed as it is by the general opinion.

Oct. 9.

A Government that does not know its own mind is nowhere so dangerous to itself and to everybody else as in Paris; and it is clear that this Government, at any rate, does not know its own mind about the election of the Parisian municipal authorities. It has come to no less than four different decisions upon the matter, each one being announced at the time as quite final. On the 4th September it announced that it would proceed "as soon as possible"

to the election of a municipal council, and on the 19th September it issued a decree fixing the elections for the 28th. On the 23rd, however, a second decree appeared postponing the elections *sine die*. A few days after, however, the Government again thought better of it, and decided that the electoral lists should be completed, and all preparations made for the elections themselves. Finally, yesterday they have come to another last decision, and have flatly announced that the elections are "postponed till the siege of "Paris is raised."

All this suggests great confusion of councils and unlimited pliability—precisely the qualities to invite pressure. Accordingly the announcement of the final decision, which was made yesterday morning, produced in the afternoon a fresh demonstration in front of the Hôtel de Ville. The authorities, having notice of the affair, had posted inside and in front of the building a detachment of the Garde Mobile with fixed bayonets. About two o'clock the crowd on the Place became numerous and agitated, shouts of "Vive la Commune!" and counter-cries of "Pas de Commune!" showing that it was composed of two differing elements, shouting, surging, and increasing with every moment. The crowd was lashing itself into excitement, when the St. Germain battalion of Parisian National Guards arrived at a run and took up position in front of the railings. "Ce sont les réactionnaires!" cried the demonstrationists, with other and stronger remarks, but prudently retiring the while. Suddenly two citizens advanced, with cards stuck on their sticks bearing the words "La Commune," which they carried aloft as though they were the banners that were to lead to an assault of the building. It was a trying moment, and the merest chance might have made it fruitful with bloody consequences; but the St. Germain battalion

held up the butts of their chassepots in the air, and just then General Trochu coming up with his staff drew off the attention of the mob in another direction. From that moment the supporters of the Commune were extinguished. Fresh battalions of the National Guard arrived, and all that was left of the original demonstration was lost in a mass of supporters of the Government, who with much readiness proceeded at once to pass a review. General Tamisier made a speech, and Jules Favre made a speech, in which, by a happy hazard, he was interrupted by the cannon, thereby gainiug an opportunity to say to his audience, "That voiee, "more eloquent than mine, teaches you what is the duty and "which the place of every citizen." Then the rain came down, and the patriots, damply embracing each other, went back to their homes and their reflections.

So far, so well. The Government has got out of its difficulty with merely a plunge and a shiver, though not, I have reason to believe, without passing through internal divisions which at one time threatened to break it in pieces. Several of the provisional mayors of Paris have resigned, and the Radicals in their organs published this morning are very disagreeable in language; but the important point is that they one and all bow to the decision of the Government. The little cloud has been conjured away, and we are restored to the fraternal union which all politicians and papers are still agreed to regard as the prime necessity of the situation.

The "manifestomania," as it has been christened, appears to have died out, and to-day everything is perfectly quiet. The women have, however, seized the opportunity of being talked about, and have come out in quite a startling, if not quite a new, character. On Sunday the "Comité des Femmes" held by far the most interesting meeting we have had. The committee has strangely enough chosen

for its secretary a male patriot—le citoyen Allix, a genius in his way, who is always finding out new devices. Some years ago he proposed to replace the telegraph by sympathetic snails; now he is at the head of the movement for replacing male by female soldiers. The few men among the audience, jealous probably of citoyen Allix's proud position, were somewhat impatient; so much so that one of them interrupted his speech. The disturber was at once handed on to the platform, and told to speak; but while he was trying to do so some lady very unfairly pinched the calves of his legs, which brought him to speedy grief, and impelled him to engage in a single combat with Allix. The end of it was that he got badly scratched and turned out. When the ladies resumed, one of them stated that she had invented a thimble, the object of which is to save the sex of France from that "fate "worse than death" so familiar to the students of warlike history. "The Prussian advances towards you—you "put forth your hand, you prick him—he is dead, and you "are pure and tranquil." The thimble was applauded, but none of the ladies seemed inclined to adopt it. The meeting ended in another interruption, but the ladies really mean business, and they have posted up an appeal to all those who wish to form part of the "Amazones de la Seine" to apply at the Rue Turbigo, 36. "The uniform," we learn, "will be a black pantaloon with orange stripes, a "black blouse with a hood, a black képi with orange "band, and a cartouche box across the shoulders." These "ladies propose to "defend the ramparts and the bar-"ricades, and to afford to the troops in the ranks of "which they will be distributed all the domestic and "fraternal services compatible with moral order and "military discipline." There are those who laugh at these maidens of Saragossa, but if properly employed they

might do a great deal of harm to the Prussians in various ways. "Honi soit qui mal y pense."

M. de Kératry has resigned the Ministry of Police, and is about to start for the provinces in order to organise the Army of the Loire.

Oct. 12.

This morning I went to the Palais de l'Industrie, and I wish I could have had with me all those who are dazzled by the pomp and circumstance of war. It was pitiful, indeed, to walk through the long galleries and see those poor broken instruments of ambition. There they lay, wan and listless, their only sign of life often a nervous contraction of the facial muscles, telling of the agony they suffer; while others were gasping with closed eyes, or moving a clasped hand backwards and forwards in the recklessness of fever. There was one with a bullet in his foot, swelled to three times its natural size, biting his lips to stifle the involuntary cry as his wound was dressed; here another terribly wounded in the head, with his face covered with a mask, having only a hole for his nose and two for his eyes, which looked through glazed and listless; while by the bedside of a third the priest was giving the last consolation of religion. Around and about moved the soft-footed nurses, among whom I was pleased to see several of my countrywomen, ladies accustomed to every luxury and pleasure, who have left them to fulfil the true woman's mission towards these poor strangers. Beyond the wards is a large room, on one side of which a mortuary chapel draped with black has been erected, near to which sat a laughing group of girls making bandages, while close to them again three men were engaged in hammering together a rough deal coffin, and quarrelling among themselves. Most terrible of all was the dead-house. Five corpses, covered with white cloths, lay there, and in one

corner—a hideous spectacle—two legs, freshly amputated, had been carelessly thrown down to await their burial. This, then, is the end of it all. These men have truly performed their allotted task and earned their wages. They were snatched away from their homes, hired to be killed off the face of God's fair earth for a quarrel that was never theirs; and here they are, while the mothers that bore them and the women who loved them are left to weeping and desolation. Is it enough, or must all such iniquities be perpetrated for ever to the end of the world? Let kings see and ponder these things, for the governed will find out some day that it is the duty of their governors to help them to live, and not to lead them out to die.

Paris continues to maintain its peculiar half-gay, half-serious physiognomy, yet it is now already more serious than gay. Drill and the mounting of guard, which were at first received rather as substitutes for the theatres and the cafés-concerts, are become much more matters of real business, and the change has extended itself even to the National Guard, which is the least rapidly formed of all the forces available. The docile and obedient Moblots are already as good troops as any in the regular army, as a proof of which I may mention that an officer whom I know defended a position with sixty of them so resolutely the day after Châtillon that only twenty-seven were left standing. The same officer, who is stationed at the extreme outposts, tells me that although vegetables, bread, and wine are very plentiful, the salt meat issued to the troops is very trying, and that he and his brother officers tried a cat two days since, and found it so good that they have offered four francs for every one that is brought to them. In Paris itself, however, there is no great difficulty in getting fresh meat of the ordinary kind, while the vegetable question is about

to be met by planting all the squares and pleasure-grounds with cabbages and cauliflowers, and so forth.

A sign of the times is that there is no kind of anxiety felt to make peace, and I am persuaded that the Parisians would not now consent to anything like the terms they would have been glad to accept three weeks ago. General Burnside's last journey between the Prussian head-quarters and the Provisional Government, although it is understood to be the first sign of a serious disposition on the part of Prussia to negotiate, has produced no kind of expression of a desire to treat; on the contrary, the Government is urged to stand firm, and to make no concessions. The frivolity and childishness of the Parisians are wonderful, but they appear nearly to have passed through their more excitable stage, and to have settled down to work, though still with only a half-hearted determination, and with much holding out of the mirror to admire themselves. The question as to the final result still depends chiefly on the provinces; but if they will put forth their strength the Prussians, certain as they are of doing it, will never enter Paris as conquerors. Another fortnight will probably solve the question, one way or another.

The terrible truth is that this siege of Paris is becoming desperately slow, and if it goes on thus much longer there will be a case for sending out a flag of truce to the Prussians to ask them when they mean to begin. The forts continue to fire out into the open, upon the assumption that they must hit something, and that it may be a Prussian. The advanced posts, too, blaze at each other from a safe distance, and then the heroic National Guard or Moblot retires to a still safer distance, to have his name put into the next daily paper as being one of the especial heroes of this "heroic defence." But not a shell or a bullet comes near the town, and even the people of the weakest nerves

have given up waking at the sound of the cannon now they have learnt that there are none near enough to hit them when they are fully awake. "One feels as if one were at "Cremorne waiting for the fireworks," said a ribald friend to me yesterday, and thereupon laughed at his joke, which I, however, having of course never been to Cremorne, was unable to appreciate. Certainly, there is a feeling of uneasiness coming over everybody, and there is scarcely anything extraordinary of the mildest kind to relieve the monotony of common life. We have had a fog and a downpouring rain, and that is all, so that we are obliged to fall back on eating, drinking, and smoking—operations which might be performed as advantageously in any one of those blessed country houses to which one's thoughts fly at this season, even from Paris.

The spy fever is decidedly worn off. There are fewer people by far arrested daily, but those who are arrested get paid out for those who escape. I am told that the best security is to carry about private letters from public men, and I have therefore got a collection of good characters which make me blush every time I look at them, and which will look very creditable among my collection of autographs. But papers are not of much use, for the wise grocers who don the National Guards' panoply, and do most of the arresting, always may ask, as they always do, "But how do I "know that you are really the person here mentioned?" There is no answer to that. For my part, I don't know how I know that I am myself. Sometimes, indeed, I doubt it strongly, as I did to-day when I got up at half-past five o'clock in order to pay a call. We are all getting into such early hours here, that if ever we get back home we shall be patterns. Thanks again partly to the National Guard, who, if they find you out after eleven o'clock, insist upon either taking you to the guard-house or seeing you

respectably home. What changes! Paris, indeed, is not Paris for any Parisian purposes; and never will be, I suppose, again, now that poor old Badinguet has gone. Talking of Badinguet reminds me of politics. They say that the Pope has been driven out of Rome, and a print has been published here representing his Holiness leaving his capital with a cage in his hand, inscribed "Saint Esprit." It is a melancholy spectacle, but will look well on the screen of a religious family.

We are all being put upon rations, and are to share and share alike the meat left, according to the number in each family. My friend and I have returned ourselves as two families, and if our supply runs short we mean to make a touching appeal for our starving children and wives. We have also brought our birthdays into the present month, and we expect our friends in Paris to give us at least a leg of mutton each as presents. We have announced that nothing under a fillet will be received.

CHAPTER XI.

SORTIE OF CHÂTILLON.

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Oct. 14.

The heights of Châtillon are certainly destined to a large share of such fame as the siege of Paris may afford. They look down into the city over three forts, which, from their greatly superior elevation, they completely command, and form therefore a position of the greatest possible importance. A redoubt had been tardily projected for its protection, and was in course of being feebly constructed, when the Prussians arrived, and took it on the 19th of September, the result of the rout of Châtillon, as the day deserves to be called, when the French ran without firing a shot. General Trochu has naturally been very anxious to regain these heights before the Prussians have time to establish their heavy guns. Accordingly, yesterday morning the preparations, which had been made a great deal too ostentatiously for three days previous, were finally completed, and General Blanchard's division was launched against the Prussians in three columns, one of which was to advance directly up the hill, while the other two were to attack respectively by Clamart on the right and Bagneux on the left. The column directed against Bagneux, composed of Mobiles of the Côte d'Or and of the Aube, took the village by assault at nine o'clock, and occupied it till two in the afternoon, sheltering themselves in the houses against the plunging

fire poured down on them from Châtillon, higher up the hill. The Clamart column pushed forward to an earthwork called the Moulin de Pierre, and remained lodged there, but did no more; and meantime the centre column, almost unsupported by artillery, was being frittered away in skirmishes, till at one o'clock, when the inevitable Prussian reinforcements arrived, it gave way, and retired in what the official report is pleased to term "good order," though I understand from a friend who has had the good fortune to get taken as assistant by the American ambulance, that the term good must be understood in a purely relative sense. Good or bad, however, they were not pursued, for the Prussians could fire into the crowd at their ease from behind the cover of the village of Châtillon, which is one large fort, every house, and even the church tower, crenelated for rifles, and all the streets closed by barricades.

At two o'clock Bagneux was evacuated, and at four the fight was over, and the French retired, having either entirely failed in their object with heavy loss, or else having, according to General Trochu, effected a "solid offensive "reconnaissance," undertaken, it is presumed, in order to ascertain whether the Prussians in Châillon were real or only stuffed. The French fought well, but, as usual, were badly handled, and, above all, utterly without effectual discipline; and, after the first *élan* was spent, became simply a surging, incohesive mob, in which men of all arms and uniforms were mixed up together with peasants and women, who had suddenly appeared, as it were, out of the ground; while officers rushed about, waving their swords without any purpose, and shaking their fists at the Prussians. During this time the forts kept up against the heights a fire which assured the retreat, and in the course of the afternoon the Mont Valérien managed to set fire to the famous Château of St. Cloud, with what object I am

unable to say, though I presume it was done intentionally, since the newspapers all rejoice over it. The day was, in fact, an exact repetition of what took place on the 30th, when Chevilly was taken and lost, Choisey-le-Roi being the objective, just as yesterday Bagneux was taken and lost, Châtillon being the objective. In neither case did the plan succeed, and in both failure has been covered by the use of the word "reconnaissance." The two days have also this in common, that they show the want on the French side of sufficient field artillery, and in the next reconnaissance they will do well to attend to this very material point, for the forts cannot supply the want at critical spots and moments. About a hundred prisoners were brought into Paris in the afternoon, and to-day there was a six hours' armistice to bury the dead and carry away the wounded.

I made a desperate effort to get outside the walls, but the gates are more strictly and sternly guarded than ever. It is impossible to pass them unless under the personal escort of some high authority; and all the high authorities I happen to know viewed with entire disapproval the idea of any such expedition. It is not difficult, however, to collect accounts from eye-witnesses, which to imaginative writers might suggest their own presence in the spirit, and possibly so colour their writings as to give readers the idea that they were present in the flesh; but I am *nearly* certain that there is none among the correspondents of English journals now here who would fall into that temptation. It is extremely irritating to be cooped up here when the cannon is booming; but the wise General Trochu does not desire that English journalists should describe his reconnaissances at first hand, and sternly maintains his refusal to give passes to them. I have been reduced to the desperate expedient of offering myself as driver of an ambulance waggon, but even that favour has been refused, and

I only hope the Prussians may find it half as hard to get into Paris as I do to get out.

Fifteen of the deserters who ran away from Châtillon on the 19th September were tried on Wednesday, and five of them were condemned to be shot. Nobody in a besieged town can be in favour of running away unless on the part of the besiegers, but it produces a very unpleasant effect to find five men alone made to pay the penalty for what is so very common a failing among their comrades. "An example "must be made," we are told, but I should not like to be one of the court that passed this sentence of example. Poor wretches, they have probably mothers and sisters who are thinking of them with pride, and looking for their return. Yet, perhaps, their shameful end will be of more advantage to their country's cause than the death of many more brave men who fall with their face to the foe. The National Guard is especially bitter against deserters. These valiant grocers and wine merchants have, perhaps, the right to be so. They mount guard on the ramparts every four or five days, within an average distance of five miles from the Prussians, and yet none of them have yet been convicted of desertion before the enemy, although they have suffered fearfully. I understand that one-half of them are laid up with cold in the head, and that the rest are so hoarse they can scarcely give the pass-word. Such are the horrors of war, and such the heroism with which the shopkeeper of all times and countries defends his till.

In addition to atmospheric troubles, we are now upon a strict system of rations, which means, as far as I can discover, that people who dine at home or at cheap restaurants must not have more than one portion of meat a-day, while those who are prepared to pay high prices at Bignon's and the Café Anglais may have as much as they like. I have

had sent to me, as one of the inhabitants of the 2nd arrondissement, a pink paper, or *carte de famille*, which sets forth that I have the "right to buy three rations of meat on the undermentioned dates"—that is to say, on every third day. Each date is indicated upon a separate coupon, which is detached by the butcher at the time of the purchase being made. The arrangement seems very perfect, but it so happens that neither my friend nor I, nor the servant (who between us constitute the family), ever take our meals at home, and thus we are enabled to do a friendly act by lending our card to our neighbours, we, meantime, eating at restaurants, where no card at all is required. This will show you how the system works, or rather how it does not work, for it merely comes round through a deal of fuss and worry to the same result as would be attained without any system at all.

Oct. 15.

A great deal of bad news leaked out in Paris last night, gleaned partly from conversations carried on between the advanced posts during yesterday's armistice, partly from "Lord Lindsey," as Colonel Loyd-Lindsay is styled with excusable inaccuracy. Bazaine, we are told, has offered to capitulate if allowed to march out with arms and baggage, and has had his offer refused, from which it is to be concluded that he is in evil case, while the Army of the Loire is said to have been met and defeated near Orleans a few days ago. Moreover, a Red Republican Government is announced as having established itself at Lyons, and another separate National Government has set itself up in the West, while Admiral Fourichon, the centre of all hopes for the organisation of the provincial forces, has sent in his resignation. The *Journal Officiel*, however, has not spoken, and these rumours—for they are no more at present—must be accepted with the greatest reserve. If they are true, however, or even

like the truth, France is in a most desperate situation, and Paris can only be defended in the expectation that "something will turn up." This kind of expectation is indeed at the present time the chief comfort of the Parisians. They so thoroughly believe in and worship their city that they cannot believe that heaven and earth will leave it to defend itself. They would rather believe that a special miracle will be worked for their succour, which in the present century—and especially now that the Nuncio has left—will probably be thought a frame of mind little removed from desperation. But, at any rate, they are determined to defend themselves till the miracle happens, or till they are starved out, and it will, of course, not be very difficult to do so as long as the Prussians are kept at a respectful distance by the forts.

A measure is announced to-day, however, which will try to the utmost the "heroism" of the defence. The National Guard of Paris, who form so large a proportion of the garrison, are what is called "sedentary"—that is to say, they cannot be moved out of the walls, and their heroism has consequently evaporated hitherto on the ramparts and around the doors of the public buildings. General Trochu, however, now proposes to mobilise them to a certain extent by calling for volunteers from each battalion, who will be armed with the chassepot and treated in all respects like soldiers of the regular army. Four such companies will form a marching regiment, which will be used with the regular troops for all and every purpose and in any place inside or outside the walls. By these means the flower of the National Guard will be gathered together and made available, and it will be curious to see what proportion of them will be prepared to exchange the occasional pic-nic on the ramparts for the stern realities of mili-

tary life, with all its hard laws and chances. Most of them have got through their first stage of fuss and excitement, and are more or less in working order—at least so far as "sedentary" work goes; but they will probably have to pass a second phase of fuss before they are worth handling before an enemy. A very fair illustration of their way of looking at things is furnished by M. Gustave Flourens, one of their pet leaders, who has published a flaming account of the combat at Châtillon, in which he talks as if he had directed all the movements, and had been the sole hero of the day; the fact being that he only arrived on the ground when everything was over, and that he had no business to be there at all.

I am told to-day, on authority, that the Prussians have made actual proposals of peace, and that their conditions now are—1. Two milliards (£80,000,000) of indemnity, besides a supply of cattle and provisions. 2. Alsace and Lorraine to be neutralised for ten years, and then to be called upon to pronounce by *plébiscite* on their future lot. 3. Prussians to enter Paris, and peace to be signed there. The newspapers do not breathe a word of any such propositions; and even if they have been made, they will, without doubt, be rejected in the present temper of the Parisians.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SITUATION.

Oct. 17.

PARIS has now been invested exactly one month, and yet for any of the material purposes of life it is still hardly possible to become aware of the fact unless from report. If I had not seen the Prussians with my own eyes, I think I should begin to doubt their being here at all, and to believe that they had been invented by the Provisional Government in order to frighten the capital into supporting the new *régime*. Here are two millions of people living in a small space, which cannot possibly produce anything for them, unless it be millinery and plays, and who, therefore, have necessarily relied entirely upon their communications with the exterior for a subsistence. For thirty days the communications have been interrupted, and the flow of food entirely cut off, and yet there is really no more inconvenience experienced than might result from the most trivial causes in times of the most profound peace. So far as the Parisians are concerned, I have no doubt that the Great Exhibition caused them much more trouble in every way than the siege has yet done. Meat is cheap enough, bread and wine have not risen in price, and vegetables, which have been the most affected, have suddenly become more plentiful; and the "horrors of the siege" have only so far amounted to a deprivation of fish, butter, and theatres. Not only is there no exhaustion, but

there is no sign that exhaustion is impending; on the contrary, the longer the siege lasts, the longer it seems likely to last, if, as appears now, it is to be really a mere question of starving out. There are still enormous public supplies of sheep and oxen, as I know from the testimony of my own eyes, as well as of salted and preserved meats of various kinds, whilst almost every family has private stores of its own besides. I am told by persons high in authority that the state of things has been represented as worse than it really is in this respect, in order to cause economy in consumption, and that when all is told Paris can live upon itself till the end of the year.

I had been told that there was a scarcity among the outlying troops, but I have twice breakfasted most sumptuously at the redoubt of La Gravelle, and have twice been invited to dine at an encampment of Moblots of the Somme, with a promise of cheese and butter, which would have tempted me but that the gates are now shut at six o'clock, and that I wished to sleep in Paris. At any rate, there is no sign of scarcity. While the rich can still fare daintily every day at the great restaurants, the poor can always obtain a meal for three-halfpence at the *cantines nationales*, or, if they have not the three-halfpence, for nothing at all. I remark, too, that the beggars, who turned out in such crowds when the repressive Imperial hand was first removed, have now almost entirely disappeared, those who still ply the trade being almost exclusively such as have been endowed by Providence or by accident with some strange and incurable mutilation.

If the material situation is no worse than it was, the military situation is, if anything, better. The Mobiles have been made into as good soldiers as any in the French army. Commanded by the country gentlemen and rich proprietors of their departments, and

organised more like a family party than according to strict rule, their regiments are the most cheerful and happy of societies, and the peasants who compose them are to be relied upon to the last extremity when led by men in whom they are accustomed to believe. The old feudal spirit dies hard in the country, and "Monsieur le Marquis" is still more or less of a divinity to the peasants who live under the shadow of his château. When, therefore, he puts himself at their head they will follow him to the death, as was, indeed, seen at Bagneux, when Count Perot de Dampierre, the last representative of that great old name, was killed, and when his men fought like lions to avenge him. While the Mobiles have thus been brought into the last stage, the Garde Nationale Sédentaire is being mobilised, or made into an active force. A decree appears this morning which establishes a system of volunteering calculated to draw out all the more bold and daring spirits, and to make them into a force available, not only behind the ramparts, but wherever they may be required. A hundred and fifty men are to be taken from each battalion and formed into *régiments de marche*, which will be at once put into the same training that has produced so sensible an effect upon the Mobiles; and thus it is expected that the army of defence will be transformed in a little time into an army of offence, with which General Trochu may enter upon a new phase of vigorous action. What is more important, perhaps, than all the rest is that the greatest efforts have been made to provide artillery, and that quantities of cannon and mitrailleuses are now being delivered daily. A few days ago I was enabled to inspect the Government mitrailleuse manufactory, and I was much struck with the extraordinary amount of labour and exactitude required for the fabrication of this extremely pretty killing machine. When turned out it looks like a dainty toy, and yet,

by the simple turning of a handle, it may be made to rain bullets at any pace that is required. It is a weapon that is very useful at a considerable distance, and in a narrow space, when the enemy is obliging enough to advance against it in column; but under any other conditions it is advantageously replaced by field pieces. With all these new weapons coming in, there has somewhat tardily arisen the question of finding men to serve them. An artillerist is not made in a day, and there is some apprehension that it will be difficult to improvise them in the time likely to be available. The difficulty has hitherto been overcome by reserving the trained artillerists for the superior work of the guns, leaving the rest to be done by soldiers of the line—a plan which succeeds admirably in the forts, but which can scarcely be carried out in the field.

The most striking progress of all is that which has been made in spadework. At most of the forts the guns are now protected by roofed embrasures, made with huge trunks of trees laid across each other to the thickness of 6ft., and covered with sand-bags and gabions, while inside every building of stone is defended by an outer coat of earth, varying in thickness from 6 to 20 feet; so that the fort may be shelled for any time without feeling it. In addition to this, the ground both around the forts and ramparts is thickly sewn with "fougasses," or torpedoes, which can be fired separately at any moment by means of electric wires, so that it will be physically impossible that any enemy should pass them without being blown up. I had the opportunity of seeing the last of these torpedoes put into position, and when I say that in the exposed places they are only ten yards distant the one from the other, you will be able to judge whether it will be easy for the Prussians to enter Paris by anything like an assault. Besides

all this there are innumerable barricades at and about all the entrances, within a circle of a mile of the gates; not ordinary barricades, but highly-finished structures of masonry, capable of being defended indefinitely. If ever it comes to that, however, Paris will be as good as lost already, and I do not imagine that the barricades will ever be of any use except to please the Parisians, for which object they have mainly been built. "C'est toujours une force morale," one of General Trochu's *aides-de-camp* tells me, but it is nothing more.

The fear with which the prospect of bombardment was at first regarded has entirely passed away, and the possibility of the visitation of shells is now discussed only with a comparatively languid interest. The Prussians are as astute as they are pious, and as they generally keep quiet on a Sunday, in order, as the French say, "to go to "preaching," they generally choose that day to send in their flags of truce. Thus one arrived yesterday from Créteil, and it has been supposed that its mission was to give notice of the bombardment. It is to be presumed that an opportunity will be given to neutrals to leave the city in that event; but the English, at any rate, will probably have to remain, for there is nobody here representing our Government with sufficient authority to act energetically. Mr. Wodehouse is always at his post, and is overworked by his compatriots, who still have a special knack of getting arrested; but with Lord Lyons at Tours, he is in too equivocal a position to take up any strong parable of his own. The Americans are specially favoured, and I learn that Mr. Washburn and General Burnside have obtained permission from the Prussians for all those of their fellow-citizens who wish it to leave Paris this week. This illustrates the advantage of being what the Foreign-office calls "adequately represented." Eng-

land keeps an Ambassador always on foot in one of the grandest houses in Paris, and when the pinch comes we get nothing done; America lodges a Minister in a mean apartment on a second floor, and obtains all she requires. We have been entirely effaced and despised during this war, in spite of our grand hotel and the expensive hospitality we require our Ambassador to display; while Mr. Washburn, in his second floor, has not only played the part of mediator, but has obtained for his countrymen every advantage they have required, even to that of regular correspondence. Surely there is a case for overhauling that yearly recurring and increasing item of expense for the English Embassy in Paris.

Apropos of correspondence, those of us who have the misfortune to be English find an increasing difficulty in getting our letters through. We cannot bring ourselves to any great belief in the balloons, which come to grief in a thousand odd ways. It was depressing, for instance, to see, as I did yesterday, a large balloon turning lofty somersaults in the clouds, and though there was happily nobody in it, there might have been, and there might also have been my letters. Nevertheless, there are occasionally other means of sending out, and I am indebted to various personages, high and low, for their amiability in acting as postmen. I confess, however, that I should greatly like to know whether my letters get through, for it is depressing to trust so much good ink and paper to a messenger who, in the hurry of being shot or hanged, may forget to make it a last request that his letters shall be forwarded, and never to know whether they have been forwarded or not.

On Saturday there was a great excitement, in consequence of a rumour that some English papers only ten days old had been received, and all the more so because it was whispered that the news they contained was of the worst

description. *La Vérité*, a journal only a fortnight old, started by M. Portalis, who seceded from the *Electeur Libre* for that purpose, gave in its columns a series of the most sensational occurrences in the form of questions, and placarded them about Paris as well. The Red Republic, it said, had been proclaimed at Lyons; a new Government had been constituted in the West; the Army of Lyons had been beaten; and finally an "acceptable" armistice, to allow of the election of a constituent Assembly, had been proposed by the Prussians and rejected by the Provisional Government. The paper had scarcely been published when an order was given to arrest M. Portalis on a charge of spreading false news, and he was accordingly taken to the Conciergerie, where he still remains a prisoner. Manifestly this arrest is a most foolish and useless step, and one of the worst augury for that liberty of the press which is supposed to be a fundamental principle in the politics of those who have established the Republic. If the news was false, nothing was easier than to deny it; and if punishment was merited it should have been inflicted only after a proper inquiry, and not by means of an arbitrary arrest without any form of procedure. Moreover, it does not appear certain by any means that the news of the *Vérité* can strictly be called untrue. The Government made a loose declaration upon the incident in the *Journal Officiel*, which amounts to little more than this, that it does not know whether the news is true or not, but publishes at the same time extracts from the *Journal de Rouen* of the 12th, which shows that it knows a good deal more than it has published.

Thus it seems certain that a desperate sortie of Bazaine's has been repulsed, and that the Army of the Loire *was* beaten on the 7th, and that several other reverses have been experienced by French troops, while the only grain of consolatory intelligence is contained in a flaming appeal to

arms published at Rouen, and in the announcement of Garibaldi's arrival at Tours, which may result in either good or evil, as time alone can show. In addition to this the Government admits that an informal proposal for an armistice has been made by M. de Bismarck, but declares that since he will only consent to a suspension of arms for forty-eight hours, and will not include Alsace and Lorraine or Metz, the proposal cannot be considered to be "acceptable." I believe the arrest of M. Portalis has been effected through the determination of a minority of the Government, and it is to be presumed that he will soon be set at liberty. The French seem to be utterly incapable of dealing with newspapers in a liberal and proper spirit, but it was hardly to be expected that the Republic would sin so soon and in so high-handed and foolish a manner.

The evenings are becoming longer and longer, and there is daily less and less to do in them. The streets at night almost remind one of London, not only because they are getting to be dull and deserted, but also because we are favoured with less than one-half of the gaslight that was afforded in the times of the Empire. It is astonishing to observe how entirely this measure, which is prompted by economy of fuel, has changed the aspect of the town, and no less striking is the influence it exerts in driving people home at an early hour. There is something very exciting and refreshing in a flood of artificial light. In London we only experience it on royal birthdays; but if it were wished to make our streets pleasant and our capital popular, I believe it would only be necessary to treble the gas-lamps in number in order to do it. The lack of evening amusement has induced one of the many political clubs to open the theatre of the Porte St. Martin, and from this evening the stage will be utilised for the delivery of "patriotic speeches and noble sentiments." The proceed-

ings are certain to be very bombastic and utterly unpractical, and will therefore probably be amusing. The right of public meeting is now of course thoroughly recognised; but the French, who have been for eighteen years unused to exercise it, do not in the least know what to do with it now they have got it. They declaim and interrupt on all things in heaven and earth, but are incapable of giving sustained treatment to any one subject; and all the meetings I have attended have ended in what an English reporter would call "dis- "graceful scenes," by no means calculated to increase the authority of the sovereign people. During the daytime the only resource for those who are unable to make excursions outside the walls is to visit the public edifices, which are certainly a curious spectacle just now. The galleries of the Louvre are bare and dark, the windows having been covered up with sand-bags; the Tuileries is occupied by wounded soldiers, tended by mild-eyed Sisters of Mercy, whose only care is to get rid of the typhus patients sent to them, as they say, unfairly. The two spacious private gardens are dank and deserted except by the pigeons of the public gardens, who, driven out by an encampment of artillery, have made this their retreat. The Imperial apartments are shut up disconsolately, and over all the walls are placards bearing the words, "Mort aux voleurs!" As for the stables, once so dear to lovers of horseflesh, they are untenanted, except by what remains of the *piqueurs* and grooms. Almost all the best horses have been taken away for warlike service; but there remain the splendid black team which were a gift from the Emperor of Russia, and some others, all for sale as national property. The prices are certainly not high; I was offered a beautiful little chestnut, marked with the royal cypher of Isabella II., for £20, and Trocadéro, a splendid

animal, for £60. But forage is so dear that a horse is a very costly possession just now, and a sheep or a pig is a more advantageous purchase. *Oct.* 18.

To-day's *Journal Officiel* contains two very interesting documents—a reply by M. de Bismarck to Jules Favre's original account of the interviews at Haute-Maison and Ferrières, and the Foreign Minister's rejoinder, which he has put into the form of a circular to French representatives abroad. M. de Bismarck, in his statement, declares that the armistice was the only point seriously treated. M. Favre, however, reaffirms that in addition to this the Chancellor "categorically explained" his views as to terms of peace, which in effect M. de Bismarck admits, although he appears to deny it. The terms of the armistice offered are, however, not matters of dispute, and it is quite clear that those terms would have defeated the only object for which an armistice was desired—namely, the election of a Constituent Assembly. M. de Bismarck indeed talks of an "armistice of a fortnight or three weeks"; but M. Favre declares that it was only offered as "effective for forty-eight "hours, Prussia reserving to herself the power of continu- "ing hostilities during the remaining fifteen days or three "weeks." It is manifest that no Assembly could have been freely elected under such conditions, and, moreover, Metz was not to have the benefit of any suspension of arms whatever, and Alsace and Lorraine were not to be allowed to vote. M. Favre justly calls such a proposal "une déri- "sion," and as such it will probably be judged by Europe.

M. Favre ends his circular by a minatory reference to the "European Cabinets who have confined themselves "to sterile expressions of cordiality," warns them that "the bloody lesson will not be lost upon the peoples," and declares, in the highest style of French heroic phraseology, that "France required, perhaps, a supreme trial;

"she will come out of it transfigured, and her genius will "shine so much the more brilliantly because it will have "sustained and preserved her from discouragement in the "face of a powerful and implacable enemy."

The same journal publishes a *résumé* of the work that has been done by the Government for the Defence, drawn up with great frankness, and, as I believe, with perfect exactitude, for I am able from my own knowledge to verify many parts of the account. We learn from this that there is in and about the place a force of 13,000 trained artillerymen, who have at command 2140 cannon, 3,000,000 kilogrammes of powder, and from 400 to 500 rounds of prepared ammunition for each piece; while as regards ammunition for the infantry, 2,000,000 cartridges are being delivered weekly.

The arbitrary arrest of M. Portalis is visited with universal reprobation, and will do considerable harm to the Government. It shows that there is a dangerous tendency to put old wine into the new bottles, and that the traditions of repression, which were supposed to have disappeared with the Emperor, are still looked upon as a sure refuge in time of trouble.

The incident furnishes another proof of what I have already remarked about the Government—that it lacks that profound sense of responsibility which alone can secure moderation and deliberation. It is intensely impressed with its first ideas, and violently rushes off to carry them out—too often at the price of having to eat its work a little later. The fault will no doubt bring its own cure with its own experience, but meantime it may work much harm to the country, and, by bringing discredit on the Government, may provoke and encourage those troublesome parties which it must be a first object to keep in submission if the Republic is to live at all.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOULOGNE.

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Oct. 19.

I HAVE just returned from a ride to the outposts through the Bois de Boulogne, or, at least, what is still called the Bois de Boulogne, for that most delightful of all resorts no longer exists as it is remembered by those who have seen it in the days of the Empire. At the end of the Avenue de l'Impératrice the gilded gates which once formed the Porte Dauphine are lying ignobly on the ground, as though to show that the time for mere ornamental barriers is past, and in their place frowns a bare bank of brown earth, pierced by two merely utilitarian roads running over drawbridges of rough-hewn wood, calculated to awaken feelings of scorn and disgust in the breast of any self-respecting family coachman. These passed, and the sentry overawed by the sight of a highly-superior "laisser-passer" which I have now been so fortunate as to obtain, there appear more banks of earth, garnished with palisades as thick as man's thigh, planks full of nails, and abattis of trees; all which, as they are expected seriously to arrest at some future time the progress of Prussian columns, show that the French have a very poor opinion of their enemies.

But, oh, what a desert beyond! The soft foliage and umbrageous shades have disappeared, and in their place is a wilderness of bare and pointed stumps, sticking up like huge thorns out of a thick abattis formed of what was once

their own living boughs. Here and there a rustic shelter stands bare and melancholy amid the ruin, and occasionally a gaunt form may be seen to rise painfully, laden with a precious burden of dry sticks. The lake looks as bright and fresh as ever in the sunshine, and happily the trees that surround it in such gracious groves have as yet been spared. Two Moblots are fishing in it with that sustained and unalterable attention which seems to belong to fishing alone of all earthly occupations; and one duck, the last of them all, is paddling eagerly about, occasionally taking a flight over the water, as though in search of its companions, and then dropping into the lake again with a splash that re-echoes through the afternoon silence. All to the left the wood is shaved bare, and a quarter of a mile off the ramparts stand out clearly against the sky; the road in front, strewn with the *débris* of boughs and leaves still green, is an unbroken waste as far as the eye can reach, and in the distance rise the heights on the other side of the Seine, whence the Prussians look down into Paris. A melancholy and oppressive scene indeed, which makes one think what a humiliation it is that men cannot cut each other's throats without robbing the earth of riches and beauties they can never replace.

As I draw near to the little town of Boulogne there are signs of life: posts of soldiers of the line; a sutler's cart selling fiery liquors of a taste which makes even the throat-hardened dragoon pull a wry face as he turns down his elbow; farther on a fatigue party carrying huge gobbets of raw meat transfixed upon long sticks which bend almost double beneath the weight. At the gate of the Bois there is the inevitable barricade, and then Boulogne itself, a fresh, white little town clustered round a church with a slender steeple threaded in lines of gold that glitter and sparkle in the sun. Manifestly the town is occupied by

strangers, not inhabited by its own citizens. All the shutters and doors are closed, even those of the shops, excepting always the wine-shops, which never shut up as long as there is a drop to drink and a customer to drink it. As I pass along I see that the side streets are silent and deserted, and yet in the Grand Rue there is a shouting, pushing crowd of men, horses, and carriages, which gives an air of extraordinary animation, all the more striking from its contrast with the scene on which it is, so to speak, veneered. A long train of artillery, several waggons full of bread, a troop of cavalry, and a crowd of infantry soldiers are all mixed up together, while every now and then an orderly, with his carbine slung across his back, gallops recklessly through all and disappears at the end, as though the throng were a mere fluid that could be divided by simple pressure. An old woman is standing at her door, wringing her hands and crying bitterly, under the impression probably that the Prussians are already here, and as they pass the rude soldiers think of their own mothers at home, and address words of comfort to her, intermingled with promises to bring her the head of "Papa Guillaume."

Suddenly as I advance the crowd ceases, and the broad street resumes that deserted air which seems properly to belong to it. A little farther, and it opens out suddenly into a large open space—the Rond Point—from which a sharp turn to the right leads to the bridge across the Seine, on the other side of which is the town of St. Cloud. Here there is a very amusing scene. The river is about the breadth of the Thames at Richmond; the Rond Point is only some fifty yards from the bridge, and therefore but a short distance from St. Cloud, the houses of which rise steeply one above the other on the hill, and look commandingly down into Boulogne. Now, the Prussians are in St. Cloud, and they give proof of their presence by firing into

Boulogne from under cover of the houses; a proceeding by which they killed a man yesterday on this very Rond Point. Moreover, they are still "potting," and altogether the Rond Point is not considered to be a desirable spot for peaceable citizens with whole skins. The peaceable citizen, however, is eminently curious, and as the Rond Point is the nearest spot to the Prussians, and the only one whence a really good view can be got of St. Cloud, he has come out in a little crowd to reconnoitre. Being, however, a wise man, he does not care to expose himself, and it is the greatest fun in the world to see a fat citizen carefully poking a telescope round the corner of a house, and reporting to an eager but prudent crowd behind him; or, better still, to see him running as fast as the accumulated flesh of prosperity will allow across what he holds to be an exposed part of the street. The joke of it is that nobody is quite sure that he has seen a Prussian at all; but then all have heard of the man who was killed yesterday, and that is quite enough.

I don't believe the Prussians are there in the least, and if they are I don't believe they will fire on a civilian, and if they do I feel tolerably certain they will miss him, so I walk forward into the Rond Point. There is St. Cloud, looking quite delicious with its white houses and green trees, halfway up the hill a house surmounted by a red flag, and on the top a low, long line, looking suspiciously like a battery. The streets are absolutely bare, and through my glass I can see that chimney-pots are broken off and shutters hanging down by one hinge, and that all the windows visible are broken; while from the door of the Hôtel de la Tête Noire, just the other side of the bridge, closed on this side by a barricade behind which sentries are crouching, an individual is peering cautiously out, looking at me through a lorgnon, just as I am looking at him.

The timid citizen has followed my movements with interest, and calls to me from his cover, "Comment, monsieur, "vous n'avez pas peur avec votre cheval?" "Monsieur," I reply, "le cheval n'est pas à moi," which is amiably received as a *mot.* Just then, however, comes the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by rolling echoes thrown down by the hills, and a rattling sound, which seems to show that a bullet has made acquaintance with some of the houses. I turn away, somewhat sharply perhaps, and regain cover just in time to see the citizen scuttling away in a crowd as fast as his legs can carry him. Thereupon I take my way back to Paris through Auteuil, where I observe a sentry at the door of Prince Pierre's house of painful memory, and two Moblots, with clay pipes in their mouths, leaning out of Madame d'Erlanger's elegant room, while inside two others are making a cockshy of her chandelier.

Oct. 20.

This morning's newspapers all go into ecstacies over a despatch (undated) from M. Gambetta, which the Government received and published yesterday. I confess that it seems to me to be a very meagre document—little more than a series of declamatory phrases, which might have been written as well at the Hôtel de Ville as at Tours. He gives us only three pieces of tangible news: that General Bourbaki has arrived at Tours; that Lyons is "completely calmed"; and that Prince Frederick Charles is "reported to have recovered from his dysentery"; but on the subject as to which we most require information—viz., the action of the provinces—he offers nothing beyond high-sounding and ambiguous sentences of an after-dinner character, mingled with exhortations to wage "a war of "tenacity." Two explanatious, however, are offered upon this point—the one, that he feared to give information to the Prussians in case his despatch (which arrived by a

pigeon) fell into their hands; while the other, and I have reason to believe the true one, is that the despatch did contain detailed information, which has been suppressed by the Government for fear of its leaking through the lines to Versailles. At any rate, the publication of the young Minister's glowing words has produced an excellent effect, which cannot always be said for the contents of the *Journal Officiel.*

By the way, there is often adopted in the official part of this journal a very unofficial tone of flippant insolence, which I note as another symptom of the want of sense of responsibility in the Government. They appear too often to write as well as act upon first impulse, and as if they attached no particular importance either to words or acts. They are apparently engaged already by outside pressure upon a course of Communism, which is enough to drive the apostles of enlightened selfishness out of their minds, and, what is worse, out of their confidence in the Ministry. Thus we are subjected utterly and completely to Communistic rule with regard to meat, and the same is about to happen with forage, the whole of which has now been "requisitioned," with the intention, no doubt, to divide it sparingly and equally among the horses, as the meat is divided among the men and women of the town. I can see no reason why they should not also requisitionise our shirts and coats, for it is certain that there are many patriots who are insufficiently provided with these articles, while others have a superabundance of them, and the cold weather is notoriously close at hand. All this pleases the poorer classes greatly, but it cannot last for ever, and there will be, I imagine, some difficulty in bringing things back to the normal state of free supply regulating itself to demand through a brutal system of high prices. In times of siege, however, principles must go

to the wall, and probably we ought all to be prepared to divide our meat, our forage, and, if need be, our coats and shirts equally. The capital monstrosity of two millions of people being forcibly shut out from the world is so great that it may excuse any of the smaller monstrosities that it renders necessary.

So far everything has worked smoothly enough, and the siege has not been felt. What will happen when it is felt is a serious question indeed, but one which is not immediately pressing. The Parisians have showed themselves surprisingly docile under the hands of the Government, and the faint attempt to agitate for the Commune has died out and brought such unpopularity upon its authors that Blanqui, a leading agitator, and one of the Radical idols, was yesterday turned out of his command in the National Guard by the vote of his own men, while even Flourens is reduced to impotence and almost to silence.

There is nothing new of importance to tell of the military situation. The Prussians tried a night surprise on Tuesday, and failed to produce any effect beyond turning out all the advance posts; but as a rule they keep very quiet, and there is nothing beyond the usual skirmishing to record. General Trochu has issued an order in which he declares that he is resolved to put an end to the system of indiscriminate praise after every engagement, and to make a mention in orders valuable from its rarity. Only three men have up to this time achieved the distinction—Count Picot de Dampierre, who paid for it with his life; the Zouave Lecompte, who gallantly rescued a comrade by swimming the Seine under fire; and the Moblet Sellier, who, after killing two Prussian sentries, surprised and carried off a third as prisoner. Sellier has been decorated, and it will encourage the Mobiles to find one of themselves the first selected for this coveted honour.

Oct. 21.

The night has been quiet. Yesterday afternoon the Prussians unmasked a battery on the heights of Meudon, which, however, they only used to fire on the marauders in the plain. This marauding has become quite a profession. It takes place chiefly on the eastern side, whence there issues every morning a multitude of men, women, and children carrying sacks, which in the evening they bring back filled with booty of vegetables. Not always vegetables alone, either; for the houses, shut up and deserted as they are, offer strong temptations, and many of them have already been pillaged. Yesterday there were as many as 15,000 of these marauders at work, dispersed between the town and the Prussian lines, close to the enemy in many places, so that some ten of them were shot. The authorities take no steps to prevent this freebooting; possibly they think it is better that what is left in the *banlieue* should be taken by Frenchmen than by Prussians; but the spectacle of universal appropriation exercises a demoralising effect upon the troops, and especially upon the Franc-tireurs, whose virtue has never stood particularly high. A party of these heroes entered Rueil two days since, and, after carrying off all that the Prussians had left, set fire to six houses as a mark of their presence. The enemy appears to set an example of discipline in these matters which it might be expected would be followed by the French; but the Franc-tireurs are entirely out of hand, and do pretty much as they like outside, as they will do until the Government can make up its mind to shoot a few of them by way of example.

As everybody has laid in provisions, I, too, have begun to think about it. At present I am hesitating between a sheep and a horse. On the one hand, I can get a sheep for forty francs, while a horse costs two hundred; but then

one can't very well ride a sheep. On the other hand, one must keep the horse, which costs at least eight francs a-day. On the whole, I think I shall content myself for the present with keeping a sharp eye on my *concierge's* cat, which I am surreptitiously feeding up for eventualities. I rather think, too, that the balance of testimony of the *gourmets* is in favour of cat, which is exactly like hare, as compared with horse, which is only like horse.

I am beginning to wish that I could hear from our wretched, foggy old England. The outward correspondence is hard enough to manage, and the only way is to walk about with letters in one's pocket, and to hand them over touchingly to the first influential diplomat or Republican one meets. Everybody who passes the lines is impressed into this service, downwards from the Papal Nuncio, who took out my last letter. A worse case was that of a distinguished general, to whom I treacherously committed a caricature of Bismarck, which, if it were found upon him, would probably have had an unpleasant effect upon his Prussian relations.

When I am in London I use the worst language if my newspaper is not brought in when I am awoke in the morning; now I look with incredulous admiration upon Wiggins, because he says that he has actually seen a *Daily Telegraph* only twelve days old.

It is a melancholy fact that life is getting dull here. Somebody has had the idea of putting out two-thirds of the gas every evening, and somebody else has adopted it, so that Paris at night looks now nearly as dull and disgraceful as London. Still there are many quaint incidents that could hardly arise without the siege. There is not much ceremony observed at any rate, and there is observable a great expansion of human sympathy. Even the English are civil and helpful to each other. Thus I am informed

that a friend of mine—(now I do hope that nobody will pretend that it was I myself)—received a few days since a most affectionate letter from a lady he had never beheld, begging him, on the ground of a common English nationality, to go and breakfast with her, in order that she might ask him *how he sent his letters out!* He says he did not go and breakfast; I believe he did.

What will be the end of this siege? I know not, for it depends chiefly, if not exclusively, upon the provinces outside; but of this I am certain, that Paris will resist—childishly, perhaps, in some respects, but desperately—to the last. As for provisions, it appears that the case is much better than is acknowledged by the Government, who, like all other Governments that have ever existed here, find it necessary to frighten the Parisians. I am assured that Paris can, at a pinch, hold out till the end of the year. William the Psalm-singing may therefore yet pass his Christmas at Versailles; but I begin to think that Paris and the provinces between them may light him such a Christmas-tree as he is never likely to have seen before.

CHAPTER XIV.

SORTIE OF LA MALMAISON.

Oct. 21.

At six o'clock this evening I was told that there had taken place to-day the most serious engagement that has yet occurred under the walls of Paris. Unfortunately I had heard nothing of it, and so am unable to give the account of an eye-witness. I went down, however, immediately to the American ambulance, just as the first carriageful of wounded arrived. The men were being lifted out on their stretchers by the light of lanterns, and as assistance was required I lent a hand and helped to take them in. They were mostly artillerymen and Mobiles, some of them desperately wounded, but most of them with balls through their legs, arms, and feet. One had been crushed by a wall, and was almost inanimate, huddled up on his stretcher with a water-bottle still instinctively clutched to his mouth, but without a trace of blood or life in his face, over which the light played fitfully. Those who were wounded in the legs we carried in on our shoulders, and in three or four minutes they were undressed, in bed, and chattering loudly and cheerfully of the day's doings. They had been *roulés*, they said, once more, but had inflicted great loss upon the Prussians, who, however, had taken two cannon and a mitrailleuse, and who had re-captured the Château of Malmaison, after having been driven out of it. This was told me by an

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artilleryman who had served the captured mitrailleuse, and who, with a bullet through his thigh, lapped up cheerfully a bowl of hot soup, smoked a short pipe, and related his adventures all at once as he lay in his bed. Most of the rest, however, had, as might be expected, no idea how the battle had gone; but the Americans who were out with the ambulance waggons tell me that the French fought splendidly to-day, and seemed to think that the advantage rested with them. Nothing can exceed the kindness and helpfulness of these Americans—ladies and gentlemen all of them—and it was cheering especially to see the way in which the ladies set to work, and without any false delicacy stripped the sufferers and wrapped them up in bed. In all there arrived at the ambulance some thirty wounded, of whom two were officers—a larger number than all the previous operations of the siege put together had furnished to this ambulance, which shows how severe the day has been. When, at nine o'clock, I left, the surgeons and assistant-surgeons were sitting down to snatch a little bread and wine before proceeding to the second dressing of the wounded, all of whom had already received a first dressing.

Returning home I met James Tissot, the well-known artist, who is in the Eclaireurs de la Seine, and was in the first line of the fight, under the wall of Malmaison itself. He tells me that for three hours it was something too terrible; that after the first beginning he never saw a Prussian, but was, like the other skirmishers, laid down in a field, firing into the smoke at the distance given by his captain—from 800 to 800 metres. Out of his company of 60 men no less than 17 are either killed or wounded, which will give some idea of the severity of the affair. Tissot declares that it is impossible any cannon or mitrailleuses can have been lost, since they were behind him all the

time, so that I hardly knew what to make of my artilleryman's account. On the other hand, he brings a positive assertion that four cannon were taken from the Prussians, all of which makes it clear that the true account of the day cannot be written until we have the French and the Prussian official bulletins. Probably we shall learn to-morrow morning that the affair was only another "strong offensive reconnaissance," but it shows at any rate that some Parisians will fight well, for the Eclaireurs de la Seine are one and all Parisians of the purest type. I learn, too, that the Mobiles behaved admirably; much better, indeed, than the line, who are inclined to "run cunning," though it would seem that there was no giving way anywhere to-day. I shall go out to the field as soon as day breaks—if I am allowed to get so far, for it is a considerable distance from the walls, and it appears that the orders are very strict. I rely upon my pass, however.

Oct. 22.

The gray twilight was still struggling with the day, and the nipping air was yet full of the night dew, when I started this morning for the scene of yesterday's engagement. Paris has changed its hours for the better, but it has not yet learnt to rise at half-past five; and as I passed along the Champs Elysées and by the Arc de Triomphe, now covered with huge baulks of timber to preserve the bas-reliefs from bombardment, I met scarcely a creature to show that there was life in the town. At the Porte Maillot, however, and about the adjoining ramparts, there was considerable animation, and a great crowd of National Guards, early citizens, and peasants coming in from the country, all mixed up together. I was asked no questions, and rode quietly out along the road, which was lined with sentries some fifty yards apart, while a number of idlers in uniform lounging about attested the presence of a con-

siderable force in encampment behind the narrow fringe of houses. I passed three barricades, at the last of which soldiers were still working, and so came into Neuilly, on the higher side of the Seine. The town was all alive with soldiery, and the banks of the river were full of them—washing themselves and their linen under the poplars, passing and repassing two bridges of boats which have been thrown across to a little island, and amusing themselves with that game of *bouchon* which has such inexplicable charms for the French. The bridge was closed by a barricade, at which I was stopped by the sentry, but the exhibition of my imposing laisser-passer, with its blue seal, procured me instant liberty to pass, and a military salute into the bargain. The bridge is, of course, mined—everything is mined here—and I got into difficulties through trotting instead of walking across it. Altogether, however, I was very lucky to-day, for I was only really challenged twice, and did not have any trouble on either occasion. I observe that in expeditions of this kind it is a great advantage to be alone. The matter is simpler, one's self-reliance is not disturbed by the fear of mistakes a companion may make, and I find that people will endure and interest themselves in one individual alone when they will be very rough to two. Moreover, ignorance of the country is a drawback, because it does not do to make up for it by questions; but with study of the map and a little topographical aptitude it is not difficult to reach a given point, though it is sometimes hard to make it out on arrival.

Some two hundred yards beyond the bridge I came to the open space at Courbevoie on which there once stood a statue of Napoleon I., where there were drawn up a row of ambulance waggons come out to collect the wounded, and apparently waiting for orders. I turned off to the

left along a broad road of the regular French type, paved for a space in the middle, and left to take care of itself at the sides. On my right lay the country stretching away down to the Seine, which came round in a loop behind me, and up afar on my left frowned Mont Valérien, looking, with its high barracks, more like a monastery than a fortress. After a little time I arrived at Nanterre. It wears the smitten and desolate aspect to which I have now become accustomed, and as I passed the closed houses my horse's hoofs echoed drearily in the silence. Thence the road descends gradually till down in a hollow it reaches the little village of Rueil, in and about which the fight of yesterday took place. There was not a soul on the road, nor had I even seen a soldier after leaving the open space at Courbevoie. Rueil itself was of course shut up, and many of the houses bore traces of shells and bullets. There were, however, a number of peasants to be seen, and when I arrived before the mairie, a fine new building with a high roof, I found the narrow little street choked up with a varied crowd of ambulance vans, officers, soldiers, and blouses, among whom moved the mayor, a dapper little gentleman in a tall hat, who looked as if he had just been turned out by a superior tailor. There were, he said, several wounded in the mairie, but it was impossible to move them, and the ambulance vans had better go on to the field itself and see if there were any still there. Just then there arrived a string of horses with baskets slung across them, on which sat a number of somewhat rueful-looking men wearing the white armlet with the red cross. It was the staff of the Italian Ambulance Corps, who, it appears, were taken prisoners yesterday morning and carried off to Versailles, whence they were sent back this morning.

Thereupon ensued much chattering, but finally some of the ambulance vans decided to push on to the field, and I,

ashamed to be doing nothing but looking on, offered my services to one of them as aide-de-camp if I could be of any use. I was accepted as bearer of the flag, with which accordingly I took the lead of the cavalcade. We had not come to the end of the village before we found a dead French artilleryman lying in the street, his face to the sky, and his clothes hastily thrown open, showing a dark small hole over his heart. A little farther on we came to the wall of the Château of La Malmaison, which here runs along the road, and over which, lying below, we could see the château itself, with its pointed towers and tall roofs. On our left rose the hills, crested with woods rich and mellow in their autumn tints, while the hillside itself was covered with vines trained on their short poles to the height of a man's waist. Their leaves also had lost their fresh green, and were paling to a soft yellow, while underneath the ripe grapes hung down in heavy clusters. Here was the great fight of yesterday, and hereabouts, too, we knew were the Prussians, though we could not see them. We turned among the vines and ascended towards the woods. At every step there was some mark of the fight: chassepots, sword-bayonets, knapsacks, belts, and cartridge-cases in profusion—one and all French. Here and there the attention was arrested by a dark heap lying among the vines—terrible spectacles of dead men, hideous ruins of God's creatures, lying in dark, black patches of gore. I will not dwell upon it. Enough to say that to me it was a relief to see that while in the majority of instances the poor creatures were in attitudes of the most violent exertion, their faces all wore a calm and almost placid expression, as though death had soothed while it struck them.

We were at this time scarcely one hundred yards from the last houses of Rueil, which is, and up to this time always

has been, in the occupation of the French. I had not, however, seen a single French sentry either in or about the village, nor did I see one during the day; and as I passed in and out in every direction more than once, I think I may say that there certainly were none posted, nor, as far as I could make out, anything to prevent the Prussians from simply walking into Rueil and taking possession of the few soldiers and wounded inside without the slightest trouble. In short, there was here no line at all, no outpost even to observe the Prussians. It scarcely seems wonderful that the French are so constantly surprised if they take none of the ordinary precautions against it, or that they always lose again at once any positions they happen to take. That was the state of the French line at Rueil this morning. This was the state of the Prussian line: as we were dispersed about the hillside somebody suddenly called out, "Here are the "Prussians!" and, turning round, I was aware of a tall fine fellow, in a long blue coat and flat cap, carrying his gun upon his arm, who came up and offered very politely to take us to those parts of the field where, if at all, the wounded would be, though he was of opinion that there were none of them left, as, indeed, proved to be the case, for the Prussians, it appears, had swept the field at daybreak, and taken in all those who were not already dead to their own lines. Two of us went with this sunburnt soldier, who was extremely amiable, and told us among other things that the French fought very well yesterday, and inflicted enormous losses. "But," he said, "they "cannot stand before our artillery." I saw in him, at any rate, no traces of the bitter contempt with which I have been told the Germans regard their present adversaries. A little farther on a second Prussian appeared—a short, stoutish man, smoking a porcelain pipe with the genial,

satisfied air of a well-to-do burgher standing before his own house in his own town.

We proceeded along the flank of the hill, chatting pleasantly and eating grapes together, till we came upon an enclosure bounded by a low white wall, breached and broken in every direction, and in some places quite thrown down. Inside, the ground was covered with trees—pines, poplars, and planes, which lay where they fell in a thick and all but impassable mass. Winding our way among these, we came to the centre of the enclosure, which forms part of the grounds of La Malmaison, and was once its English pleasure-garden. My particular friend of the pipe took pleasure in leading me about, and pointing out the ravage that had been made. Down in a dell was a large statue of Hercules standing between two richly-carved pillars, and at his feet was a little lake of clear water, bordered by tangled masses of flowers, which the trees had crushed in their fall. Farther on, almost hidden in the abattis, was a beautiful little summer-house, the walls of which were smashed in pieces with shell. I went in and found the ruin complete. On the upper part of the walls were rich carvings in wood, gilded coronets, the Imperial eagle, and the oft-repeated letters J. and N., recalling the first Napoleon and his first wife. The floor was covered with fragments of stone and plaster; in one corner lay a gaiter, a shoe half full of blood, a chassepot, and shreds of bloody linen, showing that some poor wretch had crawled in for shelter, and, as I hoped, for safety. Alas! he had only left it to die; for as I went out I caught sight of a red mass beneath the leaves, and lifting a heavy branch, saw that it was a Zouave, with one foot bare and muddy, and a dark-coloured spot at the side of the temple. His face and hands were covered with the night dew, which hung on them in sparkling drops; but his eyes were open,

and seemed to look at me appealingly. I knelt beside him and opened his coat. Poor fellow! he was dead and cold, and the kindly German standing over me shook his head mournfully as I looked up. He had fallen on his right side, in the act of running, with one arm stretched out. By the body lay a letter, of which here is a translation:—

"I am at Courbevoie, in a private house, and by no "means a bad one. It is the house of Chapon Brothers, "formerly Busson, calico-weavers, on the banks of the "Seine. You enter by a lane, and you may see from the "quay the name upon the house. For the rest, if you "come, you will only have to ask for the first company of "the 2nd battalion. I am pretty well off, for I lodge "along with the quarter-master-sergeant, in an office where "there is a fire all night. Remember me kindly to every-"body. Dear little mother, I am very well, considering I "am on campaign, and I assure thee that we are almost "like kings so far as regards our position. I think I shall "decidedly be promoted to *caporal fourrier*. Kiss papa, "Antonia, Alphonse, Laura, and everyone. Try to come "and see me. I embrace you all with my heart.—C. R."

As I left the spot, the warm sun broke out from behind a cloud, and a bird burst forth into joyful song immediately over the body of the dead man, as though the eternal life of the great Mother Nature were suddenly brought by bitter irony into contrast with the wreck that man had made of his brother man.

These are the sights I should like to keep for the princes and rulers who delight in war. The high-sounding military phrases of despatches, and the nonsensical accounts of losses, convey very vague ideas; but it is when one finds one's self face to face with the individual man, and sees the wheel broken at the fountain, that the misery of the thing really comes home to one.

"Comedy grows in the chinks of tragedy," says the Spanish proverb, and so it was on this occasion; for I found that my horse, which I had secured to a branch, had broken it off and trotted away, and was looking at me with that provoking air which horses take when they do not mean to be caught. I tried to circumvent him, but he kicked up his heels, galloped away through the gate, and went off straight towards the woods where the main force of the Prussians was posted. I felt very like Mr. Winkle, and my German friend, I regret to say, seemed rather to enjoy my position than otherwise. I begged him to be quiet, however, and finding that the brute had stopped to graze a short distance off, I stalked and finally captured him, to my great relief. By this time the ambulance vans had disappeared, and Prussians seemed to be arriving mysteriously all round me, probably to relieve the sentries. They looked amicably at me, and wished me good morning, which wish I returned, and then made the best of my way back to Rueil, springing on the way a fine covey of partridges, which flew away over my head with a clutter that reminded me of Suffolk.

Arrived in the village, I found the street before the mairie still encumbered with people. A crowd of peasants had gathered round a woman who had two large loaves, and was explaining why she was unable to share them with anybody else. I spoke to these poor people, and found them in much better spirits than might have been expected, and very anxious to give a colouring of things favourable to their own troops. One of them had in his house a wounded Zouave, who had dragged himself from the field of battle to his present location before he could find anyone who could possibly be persuaded to take him in. From the peasants in this village I ascertained that it was not true that the Franc-tireurs had burnt or pillaged

every house there—two had indeed been burnt some distance off, but that was done by the Prussians. Leaving the village again, I mounted the hill on the side nearest to Paris, and found myself within 1800 yards of Mont Valérien. It was quite quiet, but there was a mark of its handiwork in a stone house, which was literally smashed to pieces; the stones lying in heaps on what was once the floor, and scarcely a square yard of wall standing anywhere. It was by this house on the ridge that the French artillery were posted yesterday—a splendid position, whence the eye swept round from the woods of Bougival on the left, over the open country past Malmaison to the Seine, where it caught the St. Germain Railway bridge, the great broken arch of which was hanging down on each side into the river in two long arms. From this position I regained Courbevoie and Paris by a cross road running close under Mont Valérien.

Oct. 22, 10 *p.m.*

I have just been shown General Ducrot's report of the engagement, which is to be published to-morrow. It has the merit of being very frank and more intelligible than military reports generally are, though it still does not simplify the matter to those who do not know the ground. It appears that the attacking force consisted of 750 infantry, 2 squadrons of cavalry, and 43 cannon; besides which there were 4600 infantry, 2 squadrons of cavalry, and 46 guns on hand, in reserve. The losses incurred were 32 killed, 245 wounded, and 164 missing, of whom, however, many may be put down as killed, for there were certainly more than 32 dead on the field when I was there this morning. The plan of the operations was simple enough. There is a ridge of hills in the shape of a horseshoe, one end of which, starting from Rueil, runs up to Mont Valérien, turns round by the Seine, and doubles in again at

Montretout; while above Bougival, along the Bougival side of the horseshoe, run the woods of Buzenval, where the Prussians had strongly established themselves, leaning on Montretout, which was also in their possession. Moreover, beyond the Rueil end of the shoe they had a barricade and a battery. The object of the right of the French attacking force was to drive them off Montretout, then to advance along the ridge under cover of the woods to Bougival with the left, and thus to come up behind the barricade and battery, which the right was in the meantime to occupy in front.

The first operation succeeded: Montretout was occupied, and the advance through the woods begun; but while this was taking place the right—Zouaves and tirailleurs—spoilt everything; for instead of merely occupying the attention of the battery in front and the force in the woods, and leaving time for the left to come through them on the Prussian flank, they must needs break away and come down from their side of the horseshoe into the ravine, whence part of them charged the battery, and the rest moved round to their left and advanced at the *pas de course* up the hill to the woods. The centre all this time was far behind, and the Prussians threw out a body of men which overlapped the Zouaves and tirailleurs, and then forced the right to retreat back into the ravine, and finally to their original position. With the right thus disorganised it was not considered safe to let the left make their final advance, and night then coming on the troops were recalled and marched back under the guns of Mont Valérien.

Oct. 23.

The day has been quite quiet, and people are discussing General Ducrot's report. The feeling is one of satisfaction at the greatly improved attitude of the troops, but tempered with increased distrust of the leadership under which they

act. Everybody sees that the Prussians won an easy victory with inferior numbers over men who indubitably fought most admirably, and nobody is slow to draw the manifest conclusion that the fault involved in such a result lies with the leaders—a conclusion which must infallibly commend itself to the rank and file, and still further weaken their confidence.

There is published to-day an extract from another despatch from M. Gambetta, who writes as usual full of hope and confidence which it is not easy to share, and of promise as to help from the provinces which it is difficult to believe. From the tone of the provincials who are shut up here, I infer that there is little ground for reliance on any effectual help from without. The country people hate the Parisians most cordially, and above all they fear them; for they know by experience how Paris-made Governments have worked, and they cannot bring themselves to believe but that as soon as the peril is past the Reds will take the upper hand in the Republic, and play their old pranks with property, religion, and all that the provinces respect. The true tone of Parisian opinion, however, is calculated to reassure them, for it is extremely and determinedly moderate, as is proved by the fact that all the attempts of the Radicals have been ignominiously frustrated and laughed at. The mere fact that both Blanqui and Flourens have been within the last few days voted out of their commands in the National Guard by their own men speaks volumes.

Oct. 25.

I rode out again this morning to Rueil, acting as escort to two courageous ladies who wished to lay in a provision of vegetables for their wounded, an object in which they fully succeeded. The morning was raw and cold, and rain began to fall as soon as we had left the gate. Rain, how-

ever, loses its terrors in time of war. The ladies were comfortably off enough in their covered carriage, and as soon as I was wet through I felt comfortable too, for water, like other objects of fear, is not nearly so disagreeable as it looks when once its full acquaintance has been made. From Courbevoie to Rueil the road was very dreary, the country all blurred with the rain, and even the Mont Valérien rendered invisible. A peasant or two passed us, one—lucky creature—with a cart full of potatoes, which he will sell in Paris for about five times their value in times of peace; but then they had been dug up under the guns of the Prussians, and every one of them represented the risk of a man's life.

Rueil was comparatively lively. It is a little town about as large as Richmond, and we found in it probably as many as thirty inhabitants. I asked one of them—a poor old fellow, half blind—why he stayed when everybody else had left. "Why should I go away?" he replied; "I know "the Prussians — *les gredins*. I was a prisoner among "them for six months under the first Napoleon; and then, "what can they do to me? I have nothing to lose; I am "old and worn out; seventy-nine I am; I cannot see. If "I left my cabin I should die on the road, and I may as "well be killed here." Another inhabitant here came up. "The Prussians," said he, "but they are charming, the "Prussians—they let us gather our potatoes, and it is all "we have to live upon in the winter. They come and "walk about the town; two or three pass in this street "every day, and then they return home—to La Malmaison. "The other night they came and slept in the barracks "because it rained, and in the morning they went away "quietly." "But why didn't you send and tell your own "troops that they were here?" Oh, pour ça—ça ne nous "regarde pas." This is not an uncommon view of things

in the surrounding villages. The peasant wants to live, and so long as he is allowed to do that, he does not take the least interest in either of the armies that happen to be fighting over his home. As for patriotism, it is is a word he does not understand any more than he understands why there should be any fighting at all. His sole idea of a perfect state is that which allows him to "earn his day freely." Life is hard enough for him when he has done it; and whether it is an Emperor or a Republic, French or Prussians, that will let him do so much, he is content. The object of our visit was a woman who was said to possess a little store of vegetables, and we stumbled up a ricketty staircase into her garret. She was just serving out to her children the morning soup —made of horse, as she confided to me—which smelt very savoury; but in a minute she produced from under a mattress a heap of potatoes, onions, and lettuces, and plunged into a desperate bargain with the two ladies, which ended in the acquisition of three big sacks of potatoes, wherewith the convoy successfully re-entered Paris.

I had hardly time to put myself into dry clothes when it was time to go to what may be called the siege opening of the Théatre Français. Like all others, the theatre has been closed since the Prussian investment became a certainty, and its *foyer* has been turned into an ambulance. Some hardy spirits have timidly suggested that the mere fact of the Prussians being outside the walls constitutes no reason why we should be plunged into unredeemed melancholy within, and the performance was the first step towards admitting the possibility of a little recreation. Like all first steps, it was a very short one, and bore an absurd air of compromise. That boring old gentleman, M. Legouvé, favoured us with a *conférence*, which means that he sat down behind a table and spoke to us a speech of the

feeblest description, interlarded with small jokes and pointless anecdotes. Then we had a scene, "Pour les Blessés," as well played as it could be by Favart and Coquelin, an act of "Horace," and two acts of "The Misanthrope." The actresses wore morning dress, and the actors the tail-coat and white kid gloves of society, the effect of which, when imported into classical plays, was extremely depressing. Maubaunt, struggling in such a costume with the part of a fine old Roman father, was painfully ill at ease, and the illusion of the scene was of course entirely lost. Madlle. Agar brought the performance to a close by singing the "Marseillaise" as she alone can sing it, though she too evidently felt the loss of that conventional costume which, as a neighbour remarked to me, "makes her show her fine arms." The manly and moving strains of the great chant seem particularly appropriate in Madlle. Agar's mouth, for, with her swarthy skin, burning black eyes, and wild gestures, she looks the very impersonation of that spirit which Rouget de l'Isle first translated into melody. Many times a-day has the song been heard during the last three months, but it has lost none of its effect, and the audience visibly trembled with excitement when the trumpet-like chorus arose. As an experiment, the opening of the theatre was a great success—so great that not a place was to be had three hours after the performance had been announced. I only got mine through the kindness of a member of the Government; and although the house was literally crammed full, there were enough people turned away from the doors to have filled it over again. It has thus been made clear that the Parisians still require amusement, and next Sunday there is to be a great theatrical revival, which will, I hope, not despise the graces of scenery and wardrobe.

CHAPTER XV.

NEUTRAL.

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Oct. 26.

Our communications are supposed to be entirely cut off, yet we send our letters every day, or at least every two or three days, by balloon, and the Government appears to receive its despatches with considerable regularity by the pigeons which are taken out every trip. We are told to-day that the news from the provinces is most encouraging; nevertheless, nobody seems to be encouraged, for the expectations of external help has dwindled down to a mere nothing. Nevertheless, the determination to resist to the last is as strong as ever—stronger than ever I think—the idea of coming to terms is only mentioned to be scouted, and if the Government were now to make what would have been considered six weeks ago an impossibly favourable treaty of peace, it would be disavowed the next day. Prussia is at the great disadvantage of having to deal, not with a single and tangible monarch, but with an intangible nation and a fluid Government, neither of which can be held. If Paris were taken to-morrow, and the whole of the Government transported into the Prussian camp, King William would be no further advanced than he was when he captured Napoleon, for a fresh Government would spring up on the instant, or, if need be, the people would continue to resist without a Government, or with such only as could be supplied by colonels and generals

and provincial assemblies; and I am inclined to believe that they would resist with infinitely more effect and vigour after the capture of Paris than before. The resistance of the little town of Châteaudun shows that, although the provincials may be lukewarm in coming to the rescue of the capital which has so long tyrannised over them, they have no lack of courage and endurance when it is a question of defending their own homes. It is felt that France is already fallen to the lowest possible stage; that there is nothing more to lose, and that therefore there is no occasion for confessing defeat. The French, in short, are desperate. Prussia may utterly crush and humiliate this country; she may hold and plunder its fairest provinces, but I do not believe she will ever induce it to submit; she may occupy Alsace and Lorraine, but she will never have them regularly ceded to her by treaty by a regularly constituted Government; and, as she must one day quit French territory, her departure will be the signal for preparations to begin the war anew, or rather to continue it, for, if Prussia succeeds in dismembering France, there will not be peace between the two countries for the next century.

New cannon are being cast and many chassepots made daily, and means have even been found to procure fresh troops by voluntary enrolment, which is proceeding to-day at a great rate before the Panthéon, with a great *mise en scène* of flags, addresses, and municipal officers. It is rather late for such work, but it shows that the supply of energy is by no means exhausted, and that there is no idea of giving in. Nor is there likely to be until absolute starvation renders it necessary, for, short of that, all the evils of the siege have already been experienced. Trade is ruined, industry is stopped, even art and pleasure are extinguished, and there are no interests left to conflict with

those of the defence. That defence, it is true, has hitherto been purely passive, yet everybody suffers more or less from it; and it is remarkable that among the two millions of people within these walls not a voice has yet raised the cry of surrender. Probably there are few who would have given Paris credit for so much constancy.

Oct. 27.

At the request of their respective Governments all the English, Americans, and Russians who wish to leave Paris have obtained permission to do so, and the departure was fixed to take place this morning at seven o'clock. At that hour I arrived at the Porte de Charenton, intending to accompany the cavalcade to the Prussian outposts. A strange and motley crowd thronged the street leading to the gate. A file of some fifty vehicles of every description —breaks, phaetons, broughams, carts, and even broken-down *fiacres*—were there laden with luggage and passengers, fleeing like Lot and his wife from the doomed cities. There was, however, dismay among the English, for intimation had been received at the last moment from M. de Bismarck that they would not be allowed to pass, in consequence of the list of their names not having been received for approval by the Prussian military authorities. As there was but some forty-eight hours' notice given of the permission to go out, the list was only completed yesterday afternoon, and it had been physically impossible under present circumstances to get it out to Versailles. It was expected, however, that as the essential condition of providing each departing English subject with Mr. Washburne's pass had been observed, they would be allowed to pass; but it was now learned that the expectation was ill-founded, and Colonel Claremont, who had come down for the exodus, could only recommend his countrymen to go back and await instructions. Some two or three nevertheless perse-

vered, but only, as will be seen, to come to decided failure further on.

At about half-past seven o'clock the line set out, headed by a trumpeter, a gendarme carrying a white flag fastened to a lance, two of General Trochu's aides-de-camp, and Mr. Ward, the *attaché* of the United States Legation, all mounted, and with whom I was allowed to ride. The morning was cold, a piercing wind was blowing, and the sun only just showed himself in a pale yellow streak of light on the eastern horizon, to be eaten up by a curtain of gray clouds. Slowly enough, for the carriages were heavily laden, we moved onwards into Charenton, and over the bridge, through barricades, and so, leaving Maisons Alfort on our right, on the road to Créteil. It offered the same aspect of desolation as all the other roads round Paris —all the trees cut down, and the way barred every two or three hundred yards by a barricade and a post of soldiers. At length we arrived at the outposts established in a small house by the roadside, and here a halt was called in order to check the number and verify the papers of those who were going through. The few Englishmen who had come thus far were remorselessly bidden to stand aside, and were committed to a guard, with orders not to let them advance farther. One gentleman was so ill advised as to attempt resistance to the order, and tried to push past the guard as though to run through the lines of his own proper motion; but a burly Moblot reasoned with him patiently in French, and, what was more to the purpose, kept the Englishman persistently between himself and Paris.

This little incident terminated, we resumed our progress, and immediately after came into Créteil. It was a miserable spectacle, one degree worse even than Villejuif, for while the streets were utterly deserted, the doors, and in many

instances the shutters, of the houses were smashed in, and a mere passing glimpse of the disorder within showed plainly that they had been pillaged. The church tower was an utter wreck, the clock smashed in, the timbers hanging down blackened and shattered, and the bell lying outside on the pavement. Yet there were few marks of fighting, and I did not see one roof with the yawning hole that marks the fall of a shell. At the end of the village we came upon a barricade, towards which our flag of truce advanced, with the trumpeter, who blew thrice a call. There was no answer and no sign, and here a little delay took place, as nobody could exactly tell where the Prussian outpost would be met.

While we were waiting I observed a handsome country house, standing in the middle of a large garden, the gilded gates of which were broken down and lying on the ground. I rode in. The garden was full of choice flowers, and a row of fine orange-trees was ranged before the house. On the other side a formal plantation of evergreens led to a little wood, and on the left to a kitchen-garden, still full of huge pumpkins, tomatoes, and various glass-protected culinary delicacies. On this side was a perron, the door above which was smashed in. I jumped off my horse, threw the rein over the head of a statue, and, mounting the perron, passed the door into a handsome hall, and thence into a drawing-room. All the windows were smashed, in the walls there yawned great rough holes, but, strange to say, four large pictures still hung undamaged on the four sides of the room. They were really fine paintings, one of them especially, representing a shepherdess, gay with knots of ribbon, and looking with large limpid eyes out of her frame. The sight below was indeed one to look at: a grand-piano stood on one side, still open and quite uninjured, as though art had been advisedly spared in all its

forms; but the middle of the room was one wreck of broken furniture, ornaments, letters, cards, and books, among others an Elzevir, which I felt much inclined to "loot," but my principles restrained me—and, besides, it was too large to carry. The stairs were broken down below and barricaded above, as though there had been a fight upon them, which seemed extremely probable. I had no time to push my examination farther, for I heard the cavalcade moving off, and hurried to rejoin it, which I did at the side of the village, where we had to take down a barricade formed of tables, baskets, and paving-stones, in order to allow the carriages to pass.

A little farther on we found the aides-de-camp already in parley with the Prussian officers by a little barricade of felled trees which protected their outpost. One by one other officers arrived—tall, proper men every one of them, with a very liberal supply of boots and beard. The younger men of them stalked about with a very conquering air, but the superior authorities were most amiable, and in manners quite irreproachable. They examined the papers very minutely, asked for and received all the letters that had been brought out, and finally committed the cavalcade to a company of helmeted soldiers, who were to escort it to Versailles. Then we finally shook hands with the Prussian officers, the opening in the barricade was closed by a cart, the last helmet disappeared under cover, and we rode back into Paris at a hand-gallop, in order that the forts might recommence their attentions with the least possible delay. As we re-entered Créteil we came upon a small detachment of sharpshooters, who had come out in the meantime in order to "faire la chasse aux Prussiens," and who were stealing along under cover of the walls in order to come upon them unseen.

Thanks to my stamped card, I am in the enviable

position of being able to move about pretty freely, and, as may be imagined, I avail myself very fully of my facilities. I have beaten the ground on every side of Paris, from the walls to the outposts, and I find that the farther I go the less difficulty I experience—barring, of course, the bullets, which are not difficulties at all, unless they hit you. In the city itself the National Guards are still a great nuisance, with their suspicions, and the arrests that arise from them. At the gates they are even worse; but once those passed, matters improve. The troops outside are civil, even in the first zone of posts, and in the last they become even respectful; while beyond that, again, the adventurous rider who manages to get among the Prussians finds them the most amiable creatures in the world.

Perhaps the most remarkable of modern warlike products are the ambulances. The post of hospital attendant may not at first sight seem to be either a desirable or a glorious one, and yet the highest ambition of every creature in Paris—and certainly of all English creatures, from newspaper correspondents upwards—is to become "infirmiers," "chevaliers de la seringue," or "francs-poseurs de cata-"plasmes," as the ambulance men are indifferently termed here. There is, in fact, the most enormous competition for the honour and delight of a place among the only men who are certain of being able to go out and see the fighting, and those who are so fortunate as to be enrolled are looked upon as highly superior creatures. Of all the ambulances, however, the American is the only one that does its work in a business-like manner, and it lives in its tents a kind of family party, which is the most amusing study to a benighted and unattached Englishman. Fancy a beaming, grizzle-bearded, sure-handed master surgeon working for pure philanthropy, with a heart as soft as his language is strong; a spruce Quakeress, scandalised at

the slightest impropriety; two ladies of the opera; an extremely Evangelical parson, believing in the efficacy of texts printed in French; a number of bankers and idle young men, believing in nothing at all; a stray Englishman or two; and, finally, a rich lady of colour, who has left her luxury in order to perform the most menial offices for the wounded men, and to be snubbed by the rest of the ambulance—a truly adorable woman, whose utter self-abnegation and devotion should win her a high seat in that place where there is no respect of persons. These are all littered down together in an open piece of ground, which they have covered with tents, and whence they issue, always the first on the field of battle, to snatch away the wounded. It rejoices one to see the workmanlike and yet tender care they give to the unhappy victims, and the untiring way in which they devote themselves. There is my friend, for instance, who has sat up all the last two nights, and worked like a horse, till I am positively ashamed to look him in the face, when I think that I am doing nothing at all for them.

The "starving out" process does not appear to make any progress so far. Butter is fifteen francs a pound for those who eat it; but, then, most of us have renounced it altogether, and there are no oysters, and no fresh fish at all, except the Seine gudgeon; but apart from these, living in Paris is as good as it always was, and very little dearer. I can dine really very well for five francs—as well as it would be possible to do in London for twice the money. A restaurant, if it is at all fit for Christian use, is much more amusing than a club, for the very reason that its doors are open to the world at large, and there is this great delight about them, that one can light one's cigarette over coffee, immediately after dinner, without moving. I could write a chapter on this subject, and I hope that all the smart,

dinner-giving people in London will contrive next season to make smoking in the dining-room, after the ladies have left, a general rule. If they do that, I shall not so much mind coming back—for, indeed, melancholy and unamusing as Paris proper now is in comparison with its former self, I am not at all desirous to leave it.

Oct. 28.

Last night the boulevards were in a state of great excitement, for *Le Combat*, Felix Pyat's newspaper, had announced, as a piece of positive intelligence, that Bazaine had sent an officer to the Prussian camp with an offer to make terms of peace in the name of the Emperor. The *Journal Officiel* to-day denies the news, and declares that although the author of it might be brought before the Council of War, and exposed to the most heavy punishment, the Government will take no active steps in the matter, but will leave the culprit to public indignation. They would have been wise had they pursued the same course with M. Portalis. There has been a slight engagement to-day on the north-eastern side, and the French have taken, and, contrary to their usual custom, continue to occupy, Le Bourget and Drancy.

Oct. 29.

The Prussians, anxious probably to prevent the French from contracting the bad habit of retaining the positions they have taken, attacked Le Bourget this morning with considerable energy, but I am told that they have been repulsed without much difficulty. The enrolment of volunteers seems to have produced some results, for I saw about 500 of them going at an early hour to get their arms and uniforms, with, of course, a great deal of "Marseillaise" singing. They seemed of a poorer class than has yet been enrolled. The weather during the last week has been simply detestable, cold wind and heavy rain, altogether

making one's life a perfect misery. *Le Combat* declares this morning that the report about Bazaine came from Flourens, who had it from Rochefort. Here is a pretty little row evidently brewing for that member of the Government.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THIRTY-FIRST OF OCTOBER.

Oct. 31.

THREE grave pieces of news are published by the Government this morning. Metz *has* surrendered, Le Bourget was retaken yesterday by the Prussians, and M. Thiers has arrived in Paris, the bearer of a proposal of armistice by England, Russia, Austria, and Italy, with the view of bringing about the convocation of a National Assembly. I scarcely know which of the three is likely to be received with the most displeasure. With Metz goes the last of the regular army, the last obstacle to the full outpouring of all the Prussian forces upon Paris, and probably the last hope of a successful resistance by the capital. The loss of Le Bourget, the taking of which was the first little success we had had here, is in its way quite as discouraging, and both the one and the other will be surely attributed, as everything is here, to treachery. The proposal of an armistice and the admission that the Government entertains it, at this time, will be regarded as another proof that the Ministers are indeed as the terrorists declare, playing into the hands of the enemy. There were ominous threats uttered by the crowds on the boulevards yesterday; in short, it is not unlikely that we may have troubles.

Nov. 1.

I had written so far yesterday, when I heard that the

Hôtel de Ville was being attacked by the Blanqui and Pyat party. I went thither at once, and found that it had not only been attacked, but was already taken. It appears that angry crowds began to assemble at midday, and to protest, as their way is, against the bad news of the morning by crying "Down with the Government!" Among this crowd was a considerable sprinkling of armed National Guards from Belleville, and after a great deal of shouting, speech-making, and gesticulation, these men, who knew what they were about, pressed against the sentries before the Hôtel de Ville so vigorously that at last they pressed past them into the sacred precincts.

Here the Government was assembled in Council, and the first thing the rioters did was to burst open the door of the council-chamber and then to jump on the table, led by Flourens and Felix Pyat. Swords were drawn, but, unhappily, not used (for nobody seems to have had the courage to do their duty), and finally, the whole Government were declared prisoners, and the Blanqui party at once announced that they meant to make another, which they were doing when I arrived by throwing out of the windows papers with names written upon them of the new rulers of France. Nobody seemed to know exactly what it meant, however—for which, indeed, they may easily be excused—and the question asked on every side was, "Qui est-ce qui est là haut?" it being considered that whoever had physical possession of the council-chamber and table was the *de facto* Government of the country. The Place was filled with a crowd of people who did not seem, as a rule, to care, except as a matter of news, which way things went; but among them were some very energetic individuals who talked themselves hoarse about the "treachery" of Trochu and the "infamy" of the Government. There were others, however, of a different way of thinking. One dirty little

creature was shouting, "A bas Trochu!" at the top of his voice, when a bigger and cleaner man came up to him and said: "Pourquoi est-ce que tu cries à bas Trochu?" This took the little man by surprise at first, but after a moment he answered: "Mais — parce qu'il est dégommé!" The answer painted the Parisian blackguard, and, indeed, the whole Parisian population, to the life, I thought. Meantime, Flourens was giving himself all the airs of a conqueror inside. A patriotic citizen addressed him thus: "Eh "bien, citoyen, vous comptez faire voter la France, n'est-ce "pas?" Flourens looked up contemptuously and answered, "La France! Nous nous en f . . tons bien de la France. "Elle est réactionnaire!"

At five o'clock I went to the Ministry of Finance, and found that M. Picard had escaped, and was then engaged in preparing to turn out the Bellvillois, and to rescue his colleagues. He was surrounded by generals and aides-de-camp. For the moment he was the whole and sole civil and military Government, but he accepted the position manfully, and had already ordered the *générale* to be beaten to assemble the National Guards, upon the main body of whom he reckoned he could rely. While I was with him news came that Trochu had been liberated by the 106th, or St. Germain, battalion, and M. Picard at once went to the Louvre to organise with him the attack on the Hotel de Ville. I, too, returned thither. The crowds were still there, and the speech-making was still going on. Evening came and then night, and still no change. But at half-past eleven a body of National Guards made their appearance, silently and sternly, from the Rue de Rivoli, then another, and, finally, a whole *corps d'armée* surrounded the place. "C'est la réaction!" said the dirty party, and immediately made themselves scarce, while the supporters of order grew proportionately encouraged. Still nothing took place, and

the tail of the Government, including Jules Favre and Ferry, were still inside held prisoners.

At three o'clock in the morning, however, a battalion of Breton Mobiles suddenly made their appearance out of subterranean passages leading from the barracks, and of the existence of which Flourens and his friends were ignorant in their very midst; and in about twenty minutes after the doors were opened and a group appeared coming out arm-in-arm into the flood of gaslight. Some of them embraced, all of them went away freely, and thus was brought to an end the *journée* of the 31st October!

The whole affair seems to me to be inconceivably ridiculous. An accepted Government with all the outward signs and appurtenances of authority is suddenly replaced at its own council-board by a few individuals without striking a blow in self-defence; then these same individuals are ousted in turn, also without striking a blow; and finally they embrace all round. Surely this passes the wildest bounds of burlesque. The day will have taught the Parisians one thing, that the dreaded *spectre rouge* is a very harmless turnip-headed ghost after all, not at all like its great model of '93. But it will probably also have taught them that neither is the Government that body of Heaven-sent men which it professes to be; and it may teach us all a third lesson, that nobody at present in this city knows what are his own wishes or duties with regard to the Government, or knowing them, will strike a blow in order to give effect to the one or to perform the others. All which looks like the beginning of chaos more or less remote.

A notice was posted up last night, signed by the mayors of Paris (from whom it was extorted under duress by the rioters) fixing the municipal elections for to-day. To-day, however, the Government repudiates the notice altogether.

Nov. 2.

In a former account I endeavoured to explain the phases through which the question of the election or non-election of the Municipal Council or Commune had passed, and the state in which it then was. I hope my readers will have understood it, but if they have not it is not necessarily either my fault or theirs, for this unfortunate question is somewhat in the position of a pantomime policeman who is violently pulled in different directions by each of his limbs, and finally ends by being pulled altogether asunder. But in the pantomime those who have got hold of a limb keep their hold and pull their best their own way, which is not the case here. The Government had already taken four different decisions upon the point, the last of which was that the elections should distinctly not be held till the end of the siege. On the 31st October, however, the mayors of Paris pulled their way and seemed to carry off the carcase, for the notice fixing the elections for yesterday was signed by Dorian and by Etienne Arago, both of whom are executive officers of the Government, which therefore was made to look as though it had come to a fifth decision, as indeed it seems it had. Yesterday morning, however, it expressly repudiated that decision, as having been taken, if at all, under the pressure of Flourens and his armed satellites. Yesterday afternoon a sixth decision was promulgated in the form of a notice signed by Jules Favre, who announced that "on Thursday the population of Paris "will vote 'Yes' or 'No' on the question whether the " election of the municipality and of the Government shall " take place within a short period."

Everybody immediately prepared to vote "No," and thought that there would be an end of the matter. But not at all; for this morning the *Journal Officiel* announces a *seventh* decision, which again puts the Commune to an

indefinite postponement, and re-states the question to be submitted to to-morrow's vote thus: "Does the population "of Paris maintain 'Yes' or 'No' the powers of the "Government of the National Defence?" as to which all its supporters will of course vote "Yes." By this time the whole matter has become a perfect maze of cross-purposes and contrary decisions; but at present it is clear that we are to be relieved from the Commune altogether, unless indeed an eighth course should be announced to-morrow. As it is, the matter will appear obscure enough to many of the voters; for the same decree that fixes the *plebiscitum* fixes also the new elections of mayors for Saturday next, and a large number of people will be under the impression that in electing mayors, who are merely executive officers of the Government, they are electing members of a Municipal Council which is, when it exists, an independent deliberative and legislative assembly, limited of course in its functions to the affairs of the town, and playing much the same part as the Court of Common Council does in the City of London. The situation has thus been made into a perfect embroglio, and probably half the people who are called upon to exercise their rights as citizens, by voting to-morrow in the *plebiscitum*, and on Saturday in the election of mayors, will not know upon either occasion what they are about.

The press, however, has taken up the matter, and has brought all its power to bear upon the great central question which is to be first decided—whether the Government is to be confirmed in its powers or not; and every newspaper, of whatever shade of opinion, with the sole exceptions of the private organs of MM. Pyat, Blanqui, Flourens, and Delescluze, earnestly exhort the people to answer the question in the affirmative. This I have no doubt they will do by an overwhelming majority, and that with all the

more readiness because the Government has announced that, once "re-baptised," if it be so, by universal suffrage, it will be really a Government, and that, in fact, it will only accept power "in all its fulness and even in its rigour." This is well understood to mean that it will no longer tamely endure or meekly parley with the promoters of intestine strife, but that it will treat them as energetically and as pitilessly as all Governments must in this country if they desire to retain any respect or even any chance of existence.

To-day has furnished a proof that the terrorists have not learnt wisdom from the events of the 31st, when indeed they were let off much more easily than they deserved. From an early hour the troublesome quarters of Belleville and La Villette were full of excited crowds, and after much talk of the usual kind a fresh attempt at a revolution was made by a few of the more desperate, who seized upon the mairie of Belleville and installed therein Jules Vallès, one of themselves. The *coup de main* had scarcely been operated, however, when the National Guard turned out and thoroughly turned the rioters out of the mairie without any trouble, and without meeting anything like resistance. The citizen Vallès was ignominiously collared and led away prisoner, and I understand that some other arrests will be made, if they have not been made already. There was no spirit in the attempt. It was the last expiring flicker of the conspiracy, and was trampled out without any kind of trouble. It shows, however, that the Government cannot afford to be so extremely tender as it has been, but the incident will only tend to swell the majority of "Ouis" which will, I doubt not, be found to-morrow in the electoral urns. The city is perfectly tranquil, and there is even a general feeling of satisfaction that the Reds have made the attempt, which it has always been expected they would

make sooner or later; for their powerlessness has been thoroughly manifested, and the fear of them has passed away in contempt. Henceforth they had best be quiet, or they will not be let off so cheaply as they have been upon these two occasions. The people are irritated with them beyond measure, and the National Guard especially is in a temper which will not brook further disturbance of the peace.

No answer has up to this hour been received by the Government from the Prussian camp with respect to the armistice. It is said that a difficulty is made as to the place of meeting of the Constituent Assembly, which M. de Bismarck would wish to see sitting in the provinces, while the Government desires that it should be installed in Paris, that it may be able to communicate with the present powers. I cannot but think that these details will be arranged without much difficulty, and if once the armistice is concluded, I hope and believe that it must necessarily lead to peace at no distant time. I have never before thought that peace would result from any of the many attempts made to bring it about; but the negotiations now about to open bear a very different and a much more real air than any that have preceded them. If Prussia will but offer anything like honourable terms, they will, I am convinced, be eagerly accepted by a Constituent Assembly elected by the country at large, and I imagine Prussia is not likely now to repeat the impossible conditions she made six weeks ago. If that turns out to be so, the defence of Paris will not have been made in vain.

CHAPTER XVII.

PLEBISCITE.

Nov. 3.

If those English politicians who are still in doubt about the system of vote by ballot, or those who, having admitted the principle of the ballot, are disquieted by the difficulties which they imagine must surround its application, had been in Paris during these last four days, they would have been much edified. We have, as you know, been on the brink of a second Revolution; indeed, it may be said that the Revolution was actually accomplished. It maintained itself during thirteen hours, its chiefs occupying the post of authority and holding the preceding Government prisoners; and when, through the energy of Ernest Picard and the happy utilisation of the subterranean passages into the Hôtel de Ville, it was at last dislodged, it went out with colours flying, and with the openly-announced intention of taking its revenge immediately. The excitement on the following morning of Tuesday was necessarily very great, and yesterday it was greater still; for the announcement made by the Government that it would submit its fate to a *plébiscite* made all men feel that the final struggle was at hand. The Reds gave way to the utmost violence of language, declared that they would came down into the streets and fight, and actually began some barricades in Belleville, besides seizing upon the mairie.

The city was, therefore, in about as unfavourable a state as could be conceived for the calm exercise of the franchise; and yet at this moment, when the actual voting is taking place, everything is as quiet and orderly as in the most peaceful town of the United Kingdom. The actual poll, indeed, exercises a quieting effect with the ballot, instead of a maddening effect, as is the case under the fine old English plan of open voting. I have been to several voting-places, and have found them, one and all, perfectly quiet and business-like; no head-breaking, no cats, no rotten eggs, such as form the mildest amenities (well I know it) of an English polling-booth; nothing but a continuous stream of patient people, each giving his vote, and thereupon going his way. Here let me state that it seems to me to be no small proof of the practical excellence of the French system that it can be set to work in so short a time. In actually less than twenty-four hours after the *plébiscite* was decided upon and announced, everything—positively everything—was ready for taking and controlling the votes of upwards of half a million of people, and by this time probably two-thirds of that number will have already voted. The machinery that allows of such instant and full application must be very simple and at the same time very complete; and our English ballot party may learn from this that the complications with which our schemes of secret voting have been surrounded are not at all necessary, and are, indeed, calculated to defeat the objects for which they are supposed to be provided.

In France the voter has twenty days in every year to make or to amend his title, and that done he is put upon the register under a number, with the particulars necessary to identify him, and as soon as a vote is announced the mayors who have charge of the registers at once have written out for each voter a *carte d'électeur*, bearing his

number, name, calling, date of birth, and address, which cards are either sent round to the voter's house or are obtained by him personally at an office adjoining the polling-place. I describe the rest as I was enabled to see it. An elector presents himself for his *carte*, and gives his name; the *carte* is at once found among the packet, which is alphabetically arranged, and he is asked his calling, date of birth and address. Having given these, he receives his *carte* and repairs to the polling-place, which in this instance was established in a room of the Mont de Piété, Rue Buonaparte, or, as it is now called, Rue du Peuple. The door was guarded by two National Guard sentries, who allowed six or eight persons to enter at a time; a favour which they extended to me as a foreigner anxious to see the working of the ballot, although the rule is that none but those with *cartes d'électeur* are allowed through. The room was furnished with a table, on which stood a square oak box, locked with a padlock, and with a slit in the top. Behind the box stood the "president," holding a pair of scissors, and smoking a cigarette, and with him three or four citizens delegated to oversee the operations. On his left sat an officer with a copy of the register, containing the full account of each voter, and having a blank column on the right; and on his right another officer, with an entirely blank register. An elector presented himself before the box, and handed his *carte d'électeur* to the president, who called out the number only. The officer on his left referred to his copy of the register and replied with the name and address of the elector, which the president compared with those upon the *carte*, and, finding them tally, took the bulletin or voting-paper, folded it up and dropped it into the urn, after which he cut one corner of the *carte* and handed it to the officer on his right, who transcribed it on to his list;

the officer on the left meantime marking the elector's name with a cross in his blank column, to show that he had voted. The elector then signed his *carte*, and that was all. The voting-paper simply bore the word *Oui* or *Non*; indeed, if it bore anything else whatever it would be counted as null and void; and thus, as will be seen, the secrecy is perfect, and incapable of being defeated at any future time, whilst the security against fraud or personation is in all respects as great as, and in some greater than, in England. The Government expects that there will only be some 50,000 or 60,000 Noes, but the general opinion is that there will be even less.

No news has at present been received of the armistice, for M. Thiers is still at Versailles, and meantime hostilities are by a tacit agreement almost entirely suspended. Some of the newspapers published yesterday a despatch "communicated "by the Government," to the effect that General Cambriels had destroyed a Prussian *corps d'armée* of 6000 men in the Vosges, but this morning the Government denies having sent any such communication. The letter containing it professed to be signed by three of the Ministers, and was written on the official paper of the Hôtel de Ville, and sealed with the official seal. The explanation, however, simply is that both paper and seal were stolen during the invasion of the 31st, and the object of the manœuvre is manifest—to influence to-day's vote, by raising a feeling against the Government as being desirous to make an armistice when Fortune has begun to turn in favour of France. Such are the devices to which the Reds are reduced.

Nov. 4.

It was known late last night that the vote had resulted, as was expected, in a large majority of "Ayes" being given to the Government, and this morning partial accounts pub-

lished in the newspapers seemed to show that they were to the "Noes" in the proportion of something like seven to one. The official declaration was made from the Hôtel de Ville. A platform had been erected in front of the centre door and hung with drapery and flags, and surmounted by a bust representing the Republic. A considerable crowd had assembled, and at twelve o'clock the doors opened, and Etienne Arago appeared and read out the numbers—"*Oui*, "321,373; *Non*, 53,585"; which, however, do not represent the entire result, as there are still wanting the votes of three suburban communes, of certain sections of the National Guard, and of the whole army of Paris. The vote of the army, indeed, is not to be published—"to avoid giving the "enemy precise information as to the forces in and about "the city," but there is no doubt that it is almost unanimous in favour of the Government. The result, however, as announced, is perfectly decisive, and it was received with much enthusiasm by the crowd, and with shouts of "Vive la République!" "Pas de Commune!" and so forth. Then some workmen turned out; one of them pulled down the drapery and the flags, another walked away with the Republic under his arm, and the *plébiscite* of the 3rd November was over.

The *Journal Officiel* publishes a proclamation by the Government, which congratulates itself upon the result of the vote, and declares that it will henceforth "not permit "a minority to attack the rights of the majority, to defy "the laws, and to become by sedition the allies of Prussia." The promise is an opportune and a necessary one. It remains to be seen whether the Goverment will act up to it; but in all probability they will, for their timidity has doubtless arisen precisely from the fact that they had no real delegation of authority, and consequently they felt they had no right to punish or to employ force. Now,

however, they have been, not, indeed, thoroughly regularised as the Government of France, but at any rate regularised so far as Paris is concerned, and they will probably believe in themselves and act up to that belief far more energetically than they have hitherto done.

Nov. 5.

The Government publishes to-day the final result of the *plébiscite*, excepting only the votes of one or two of the communes, the inhabitants of which have taken refuge in Paris. This final result is 557,996 *Oui* and 62,608 *Non*, so that the former predominate nearly in the proportion of nine to one, and thus afford a very decisive answer to the question of confidence. To-day the elections of the mayors are taking place, and those over the whole of the Executive will have been reconstituted on the base of universal suffrage. The Government has begun at once to show that it has more confidence in itself than before the elections, for yesterday it ordered the arrest of most of the terrorist leaders. Blanqui and Flourens have managed to escape; but Félix Pyat, Tibaldi, Maurice Joly, Cyrille, and some five or six others have been lodged in prison, and are to be brought before the military tribunals. The arrests come a little late, and after the *plébiscite* it might have been wiser to leave these men at large; but the Government feels itself strong now, and apparently cannot rest without shewing its strength.

The Reds, indeed, furnish every kind of excuse for anything that may be done to them, for they announce openly that they mean to renew their attempt at Revolution, and to establish a Commune which shall conduct the defence with energy. What that actually means may be judged from the programme published yesterday by the *Patrie en Danger*, Blanqui's own peculiar organ: "Every citizen who "dares to speak of peace or of compromise must be

"arrested. All churches must be closed to religious "service and used as barns, for the meetings of clubs, or for "any other revolutionary purpose. All the ambulances "must be purged of priests, who must be arrested, armed, "and placed before the patriots in the most dangerous "places. Barricades must be erected. This is the first "thing to think of. No citizen must go out unless armed "—revolvers, daggers, bayonets, all are good. All the "Bonapartist agents must be arrested. All provisions "must be put into a common stock, and each citizen be "placed on strict rations. Every individual who knows of "a hiding-place of gold, silver, or valuables, must make a "declaration thereof at the mairie. Every house must bear "a paper stating the name, age, and occupation of all its "inhabitants. All women and children must be placed in "places sheltered from projectiles. Their cries and their "fears will hinder the action and paralyse the courage of "some men." These are the measures which the Reds would apply, and you may judge from their utter absurdity of the increased chances of defence which a Red reign would bring.

The mannikins who think they have inherited the mission of that little knot of determined men who fought for and won power in the first Revolution and who beat all the armies of Europe from Paris, think they can repeat the history of that time by repeating some of its outward signs. But the spirit is utterly wanting to this form. The old horrible but vigorous fanaticism that made men despise life, and spill their own and other men's blood like water, no longer exists. The rule now is to make, indeed, "a pact "with death," and then to "retire in good order." As for blood, they dare not look upon it or even think of it without horror, any of them. I suppose that the most daring writer of farces never conceived anything so wildly absurd

as that which actually happened on the 31st October. A grave and respectable Government is assembled in council in the building appointed for that purpose, with sentries at the external doors, and all the means and appliances to ensure respect in full operation. Suddenly the door of the council-chamber is broken open, a young man jumps upon the table, and after walking about among the blotting-paper and inkstands and flourishing his sword under the noses of the astonished councillors, announces that henceforth *he* is the Government. Some other people drop in casually, and he begs them as a favour to write down a few names to be associated with his in the governing task. He takes the old Government prisoners, barricades the doors, and immediately sets about governing the country by issuing orders, of which a considerable proportion are actually executed without question. Meantime the gentlemen who have dropped in occupy their time pleasantly in consuming every eatable and drinkable thing upon the premises, also in smashing all the furniture of which they do not approve, alternating these amusements by pointing loaded firearms at the old Government with threats of death. At the end of twelve hours, however, two or three trap-doors open and a few men appear, also armed, and with a manifest intention of turning out the new Government. The young man and his friends are equal to the situation. "Oh," they say, "if you really "mean to fight us, and perhaps to shed blood, that is a "different thing. We never intended that." "We really "do mean it," reply the new-comers. "Then in that case "we shall of course retire; perhaps you will be so kind as "to see us to the door." To the door accordingly they go, linked arm in arm to show their common horror of bloodshed, and there they meet 20,000 armed men, who ask no questions, but, like the two Governments, old and new,

go quietly home to bed. Is it not supremely funny? And is it likely that men who act in this way will ever do anything great or heroic, or ever be anything but laughing-stocks to each other, to the Prussians, and to all Europe and the world? I think not.

Nothing more is known up to this time of the armistice, but there seems to be every probability that it will be concluded; and if so, we may look for the meeting of a Constituent Assembly within a month from this time. Then, however, the great difficulties will begin. King William and M. de Bismarck appear to make it their chief present ground of complaint that the French do not know that they have been beaten. If that knowledge is held to involve the admission that Alsace and Lorraine are to be given up, and that the Prussians are to enter Paris, they most assuredly do not know it; and in the present situation I am persuaded that no National Assembly will consent to the dismemberment of France, any more than the Parisians will consent to the occupation of the capital. They may be ultimately driven to both—that is a question apart—but it will not be till after another struggle has been tried and failed. At present I see no sign of yielding. As far as Paris is concerned, it is felt that the garrison has already inflicted a sensible check upon the Prussians by keeping them fifty days before the walls, and that by the resistance offered—passive and not very glorious though it has been—the patience of Prussia has been, to some extent at least, exhausted, and her confidence to some extent weakened; that the situation, in short, is considerably better than it was on the morrow after the capitulation of Sedan. That being so, the Parisians would prefer to see the thing out to the end, however bitter and humiliating that end may be, rather than give in now, and admit the Prussians as conquerors. What Paris feels about itself,

the provinces will be very likely to feel about the country, and if peace is to be made as the result of the armistice now expected, it must be made upon some other basis than that of an absolute cession of territory and a triumphal entry into the capital. France, it may be said, cannot any longer resist; but she does resist. It is precisely of that that King William complains, and the fact is not to be lost sight of in estimating the chances of her submitting to dismemberment and humiliation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARMISTICE.

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Nov. 6.

A NOTE in the *Journal Officiel* of this morning informs us that the negotiations for an armistice have fallen through, since Prussia will not agree to allow the entry of any fresh provisions into Paris, and will only agree, *avec des réserves*, to the participation of Alsace and Lorraine in the election of a National Assembly. I do not know on what ground the revictualling of Paris is denied, but it seems absurd to suppose that a prolonged armistice of twenty-five days, such as that proposed, could be accepted without that as a condition; otherwise the city might positively be taken in consequence of the armistice, since it would be eating out its supplies, and at the same time would be debarred from the use of its offensive powers. An armistice, to be fair, must involve the maintenance of both sides *in statu quo;* but what the Prussians propose is that they should be left in as good a condition as they now are, and that Paris should be deprived of twenty-five days' provisions; or, in other words, that its starvation point should be brought nearer by twenty-five days. Such a proposal is so manifestly inadmissible that it will be interesting and curious to know how M. de Bismarck justifies it; as for the Parisians, they had better have surrendered at once than have accepted it. The incident shows how sincere the Chancellor is in desiring peace, and what extreme

importance he attaches to the desire of the four Great Powers for an armistice. He does not refuse it, indeed, but he attaches a condition to it which makes it a mere derision. It will be interesting and curious also to see how the Powers will be pleased with this contemptuous reply to their solemn adjuration.

Nov. 11.

It is now eight weeks since we began to run up and down in this great city, like Sterne's starling, crying, "I "can't get out! I can't get out!" At first it was novel, and, therefore, entertaining. The cage was a large one, and as we beat about the bars we thought it vastly fine to be in such an incredible situation, and we admired ourselves hugely—I speak as a Parisian—and called loudly upon the world at large to admire us too. We were heroic, indomitable, splendid, courageous fellows, and we didn't care what happened; we would resist to the last stick, and then we wouldn't surrender; we would disappoint all those sneering critics who said that we had not the heart to hold out for three days; and we would smash, burn, and destroy everything, and bury ourselves beneath the universal ruins, by way of showing what Paris could do when roused.

Well, if the truth must be told, we don't admire ourselves nearly as much now. The fact is that we are getting bored. *Anything* that lasts two months becomes a nuisance, I don't care what it is; and we are beginning to want something new—even if it were Peace. The idea of those stolid Germans sitting down here outside, and taking us by simple waiting, is irritating when it has lasted for two months. As for the glory of the thing, that is fast disappearing with the provisions. The weather, too, is disgusting—no sun, and no end of rain. Why, then, let us get to the end of it somehow—and, by the way, now I think of it (speaking still as a Parisian), there are the

provinces drifting about unhappily, and in want of a National Assembly. That, at all events, will be something new; and Papa Bismarck wants that too. Let us, therefore, manage it between us. Little Thiers is over there, and the four Great Powers have done something or other—God knows what, but something; and it will go hard but between us all, and humanity to boot—(Oh, blessed humanity, we had forgotten you too!)—something will come out that will put an end to our slow existence. Very well, then, we want Peace or an armistice, and in Peace or an armistice we will steadfastly believe until further orders. Alsace and Lorraine? Well; yes—they must be thought about. We will arrange that; but, first of all, let us get out of Paris, and renew our acquaintance with fresh butter and daily news, and first representations, and duels, and scandals.

That, I fancy, is about the state of the Parisian mind just now; that, at any rate, is the tone of its proprietors, as they wander about their cage. I suppose, therefore, that the end is near; unless, indeed, the mysterious Trochu takes it into his head to set his famous plan—they call him here "the General Rataplan"—once more running. Running, be it remarked, is a word I use in all simplicity; it reminds me, though, that the vendors of bullet-proof breast-plates have now taken to selling, as well, bullet-proof *back*-plates—not before they are required, perhaps. Altogether, as the London newspapers are, I have no doubt, telling their readers at this moment, we may very possibly have Peace; but, on the other hand, we may very possibly have war—and, on the whole, we may have either the one or the other—it depends a great deal upon the weather.

The weather has not been behaving at all prettily of late, for we have had far more than our fair share of rain and snow, and such like amenities of the season. This

entirely ruins the amusement of riding about the outposts, for the off-chance of coming across a fight is dearly purchased at the expense of a certain wetting through when one has only one suit of clothes, and no money to buy any more. The company outside is not inviting, for it consists chiefly of marauders—a very villanous-looking race. The Bois is, of course, deserted. When I passed through it the other day, it was a howling wilderness of stumps, and a gang of fishermen were hauling a seine net in the upper lake—with no fish in it. Yesterday, however, which was a sunny day, the favourite promenade was comparatively full of carriages, more or less elegant, and there was a larger muster of riders than in the best of times, for everybody rides now. Even Jules Ferry and Rochefort are taking lessons of equitation, by way of qualifying themselves for their high political positions. It is considered that every Minister ought to be capable of caracoling before the people upon occasions—and a pretty mess they make of it as a rule. A second batch of the English, Austrians, Chinese, and Africans, who don't see the fun of being bombarded, or starved, or both, went out last Tuesday morning at the cold and early hour of seven. I accompanied the cavalcade to the Prussian outposts, and during the three hours that were consumed in examining papers, had a long conversation with one of the enemy's officers, an extremely good fellow, who had passed several years in France, and spoke the language with facility. He told me that their chiefs did not really mean to enter Paris, but to take one or two forts which would give them command of the city. Their life, he said, was very dull out there; nothing but soldiers to see all day long, and very often nothing but potatoes to eat, so that it was quite a pleasure to be among Christian faces for a short time. He was very desirous that Peace should be made, as were all

those of his companions with whom I spoke. They were all painfully polite, and bent double in bows every other minute, especially to the French. "Après tout, ils sont "assez bons garçons," said one of the latter, in surprise, and so they are; but the whole scene reminded me of those gentle burglars, who take possession of a man's house, and talk to him pleasantly, or even courteously ask him to supper off his own provisions while they are packing up the spoons. There has been a good deal of this packing up, mostly done, it is true, in the organised shape of "requisitions" (what a fine word for robbery!), but not a little in the shape of individual plunder. "We can't always "help it, you know," said a Prussian officer to me. Perhaps not; but it is none the less plunder, and brings with it none the less misery, and often death, to the victims of it. Putting aside politics and fine words is it not monstrous that a million or so of armed men should be going about a country not their own, and laying their hands upon everything they come across—even to the bed of the pauper and the cripple? It will take a great many fine words to make common-minded people think that it is anything else than dastardly and barefaced robbery, which no politeness will cover.

Trochu runs just now a great risk of losing his popularity, for he is beginning to fall under that most fatal of dangers to a leader of Frenchmen—ridicule. "Eh bien! "et ce plan?" is the question everywhere sarcastically asked, and to which no answer has either come or been foreshadowed. In his new name, "Le Général Rataplan," there lie a small joke and a great danger, and he is said to be only able to make sorties *in* Paris. We expect something serious shortly, however.

Nov. 12.

Notwithstanding the obstinate silence of the Government,

or perhaps partly in consequence of it, the belief that negotiations are still being pursued grows stronger hourly. Last night, indeed, it was freely asserted that an armistice had been actually agreed to, but this morning only brings a repetition but no confirmation of the assertion. It seems to be agreed upon all hands, however, that M. Thiers has not gone to Tours, as was supposed, but that he is still either at Versailles or at Sèvres, and therefore, it is concluded, still in negotiation with M. de Bismarck. At any rate, the impression gains ground that either peace itself or an armistice leading to it is at hand. The wish is probably father to the thought—certainly at present the only authentic father that can be discovered. This wish is assuredly become very earnest, for it is felt, in the first place, that the defence of Paris can serve no good purpose in face of the inaction in the provinces; and what is felt even more strongly is that it is of the highest importance to have a National Assembly elected competent to speak and to act for the country. The provinces are in a state of anarchy so far as we have any account of them, with every man of mark setting up a Government for himself on his own principles; and if something is not done, and that quickly, to hold together the national bundle of sticks, it will infallibly be again unbound, and France will become what it was three hundred years ago—a mere geographical expression for a number of independent provinces. Marseilles, Lyons, Bordeaux, Lille—all the great centres, in fact—are ready to break off, and the only chance of arresting the disintegrating process is to bring together from all parts an Assembly of freely elected delegates, with sufficient authority to reunite the scattered members of the body politic, and to re-make the national unity upon fresh and firmer bases; besides which the war cannot be terminated without the formation of some such

regular authority having power to treat for the country. Those, therefore, who do not wish for peace wish for an Assembly, and to that end desire an armistice to allow of its election. So earnest, indeed, are some politicians to attain this result that they would have the elections made with or without an armistice, while others begin to say that M. Jules Favre has, perhaps, in the last attempt to bring it about, put his conditions in too offensive and inelastic a form. The Government has been called upon again and again to give a detailed account of the interview between M. Thiers and M. de Bismarck, and an exact transcript of the written communications which passed at the same time, but a most obstinate silence is maintained, and nothing has been given to the public beyond the bare, bald account in the *Journal Officiel* of last Sunday. There is a way of putting conditions which makes it impossible to consider them, and it is indeed only too likely that M. Jules Favre allowed his unfortunate style of handling diplomatic questions to get the better of him. It seems, at all events, extremely unlikely that the Prussians would have refused the armistice in the manner and on the ground stated by the Government. The tone of public feeling is decidedly peaceful, but there is still as great a determination as ever to resist either the cession of Alsace and Lorraine, or the entry of the Prussians into Paris. When an Assembly is elected it will be necessary to consider where it shall meet, as in all probability there will be a strong desire on the part of the provinces that its seat may be somewhere else than at Paris. They are determined no longer to submit to the tyranny of the capital. The material difficulties of any other course, however, will probably bring about the choice of Paris as a meeting place, and the question can be finally settled at a subsequent and more favourable moment.

Nov. 13.

The *Journal Officiel* of this morning declares that the rumours of an armistice being in continued course of negotiation at Versailles "rest upon no facts that the Government can verify," which is saying very little, and which it will be deemed in no way amounts to or even implies a denial that negotiations are in fact being continued. The style and wording of all the official communications are lamentably slipshod, and those that are not characterised by utter ambiguity, sin, at least, by want of taste. Thus, yesterday the military order of the day was entirely devoted to Sergeant Hoff, who was declared to be decorated because he had "killed about thirty Prussians," and this morning we have another military report about the surprise of a post of six Prussians, which is presented as though it were a great victory after a great battle, instead of being a comparatively trivial and unimportant incident. The newspapers are all occupied in guessing at the state of the negotiations, or in asserting or denying that there are any negotiations at all. The Pont de Sèvres is just now the centre of all interest, and whether anything is being treated or no, certain it is that the white flag continues to be almost permanently displayed there, and that there is a great movement between the two armies.

The military situation has not changed materially, but there is a little advantage to be placed to the account of the French, who repulsed a night attack on Friday, at the Moulin Saquet and Villejuif, where it is believed a large number of Prussians were killed by the mitrailleuses. The material condition of the city also remains much about what it was; but I have felt the first "horrors of the siege." Yesterday morning there was reported for the first time an utter absence of milk. There has been considerable suffering

among the younger children of the place through the scarcity of this article of food, and all that there is to be had will henceforth be reserved primarily for them. It is not very good, however, after all. The smallpox is reported to have broken out very severely among the Prussians. However that may be, it is certainly making great havoc here, for last week there were no less than 380 deaths from it—a larger number than has ever before been known. The Government has issued a pressing invitation to all citizens to be re-vaccinated.

Nov. 14.

At what stage the negotiations have arrived, or whether there be any negotiations, nobody knows, but unless they are hastened they will, I am persuaded, be lost and forgotten in a *dénouement* of a different kind, prepared by different means. There is the hum of preparation in the air. The various forces have been recast into three great armies, with the avowed object of entering upon the offensive phase of the defence. The National Guards have been skimmed of their more vigorous elements, which have been thrown into the active army, and this morning there is published a proclamation by General Trochu which reads throughout like the last word of a man about to tempt fortune audaciously. He reviews the work that has been done in organising the defence of Paris with the tone of one who has constructed a complicated machine, and is giving it a last look before setting it to work. After recounting all this, "Eh bien," he says, "l'avenir "exige encore de nous un plus grand effort, car le temps "nous presse. Si nous triomphons nous aurons bien "mérité de la patrie en donnant un grand exemple. Si "nous succombons, nous aurons légué à la Prusse, qui aura "remplacé le premier Empire dans les fastes sanglants de la "conquête et de la violence, avec une œuvre impossible à

"réaliser, un héritage de malédictions et de haine sous lequel "elle succombera à son tour."

This is not an encouraging tone; it is too much that of a desperate player who has resolved to stake all on a last throw of the dice. In truth, upon the last great effort, which I believe is preparing, all is staked. I look with the most profound apprehension for the result. I cannot believe but that the French will, if they attempt a great sortie, be beaten, and in that case I foresee that Paris will be the theatre of terrible scenes. Belleville will raise the cry of "Treason!"—it is already raised—and will descend into the richer quarters of the town to kill and to pillage. To this I have always believed Paris must come at last, for if no sorties were made, and no defeat sustained, hunger must sooner or later furnish a goad which Belleville is only too ready to answer. As long, however, as the National Guard of the richer portion is in the town, Belleville could only venture to move at the last extremity, and, that reached, there would still be a fight before either were subverted. But with the city stripped of all regular troops and all the reliable fighting portions of the National Guard, Belleville will be omnipotent, and then woe betide the well-to-do. As for the Prussians, they will probably let the thing run, and will wait grimly in one or two of the forts till the fire and strength of Paris have been spent upon itself, when they will be hailed as deliverers, not by the "mob," as M. de Bismarck predicted, but from the mob. The only thing that can, in the event of a sortie, save us from this danger is a French victory, and it is not possible to believe in, or even to hope, for a victory, unless through some impossible intervention of fortune. The Government play their heads, every man of them, and if they have paused to measure the chances of success they had best resolve, as Trochu himself declares he has done, to go out

with the army and to cut through or die fighting. The prospect is indeed a black and desperate one, and happy indeed will those be who come out unscathed if it should, as I fear it will, be realised. The next few days will, at any rate, I believe, bring us face to face with the end. A victory alone can save us from anarchy; of that I am persuaded.

LE PETIT MOBLOT

CHAPTER XIX.

ORLEANS.

Nov. 14, *Midnight.*

I HAVE just returned from a public meeting at the Folies Bergères, which is considered the most stormy of all the clubs which nightly rejoice in speeches. The theatre, for it is one, was entirely filled with an audience of what would be called in England the lower and lower-middle class, who are all classed here together with the rest as "citizens." A sergeant of the line was making a violent speech against his generals, and generally against everybody in authority, with exaggerated gestures which kept his red woollen epaulettes dancing in perpetual movement on his shoulders. He was interrupted by cries of "Aux avant postes le "sergent!" and finally degenerated into a personal defence, which was cut short by the impatience of the audience. A citizen then presented himself with a motion requesting the Government to decree a universal requisition of all provisions, which was at first resisted on the ground that it would enable the "alguazils of authority" to seize upon the property of private persons, "which," said one objector, "would be a robbery"; but the orator explained that he only meant the robbery to be effected on the property of merchants and shopkeepers, which was held to meet the objection, and the motion was unanimously adopted. Another citizen had scarcely begun his speech when an excited individual bounded on the stage and declared that

he should not be heard because he had refused to serve in the National Guard. The citizen explained that he had served, but had been absent lately "on account of his "having caught a rheumatism on the ramparts"; whereupon he was extinguished with cries of "Aux ambulances!" The event of the evening, however, was the reading by the president of a despatch from Gambetta announcing no less a piece of intelligence than the recapture, on the 10th, of Orleans, with 1000 prisoners, two cannon, ammunition, and provisions, after two days' fighting. This news was received with great cheering and clapping of hands; but I was surprised to hear from the conversation around me that a certain number of the audience entirely refused to believe it. It certainly comes very opportunely for the sortie which is, I believe, contemplated. As I write I hear the boom of the cannon, oft repeated, coming through the still night, probably from Mont Valérien, which throws shells over to the heights of Montretout pretty well through the twenty-four hours.

Nov. 16.

During a whole fortnight the pigeons of the Republic, which had brought us almost daily news from Tours, had ceased to arrive, and all kinds of explanations were current to account for the disquieting fact. The Prussians, it was said, had told off a division of their best marksmen to shoot the feathered messengers, and one newspaper "knew for "certain" that hawks had been imported from Saxony in order to chase and to kill them. The explanation really seems to be, however, to belong to some other category, possibly to the circumstance that no pigeons were despatched from Tours, for on Saturday last a bird arrived in the dovecote, half dead with fatigue, his feathers stained with blood (though he was not wounded as far as could be discovered), but carrying in his fan-like tail the precious

quill containing the despatch which had been committed to him. Since then we have again had daily arrivals, and the news that has thus reached Paris has been of a most encouraging character. The Parisians have made up their minds to hear of nothing but misfortunes, they have come to the conclusion that the provinces are lying utterly at the mercy of the Prussians, and when they learn that a fresh town has fallen they accept it as a matter of course. It is not a little to their credit that this belief in the utter desperation of their country's cause has not in the least diminished their constancy, or their determination to resist, so far as they are concerned, to the very last. "Vive la guerre quand même!" is the cry to which they still rally with unabated courage, but they seem to have been brought into a frame of mind which makes it impossible for them to believe that Fortune will ever again smile upon the efforts of France. Thus, when yesterday morning the Government published the news that Orleans had been recaptured after two days' battle, it was received with a sad smile of incredulity, as being too impossible a success to be true; and, now that the general opinion has accepted the despatch, it has been very far from producing that wild excitement which might have been expected. On the contrary, it is discussed in a calm and collected spirit, quite foreign to the ordinary Parisian nature, and, instead of wasting time over rejoicing, the leaders and expounders of public opinion have set themselves at once to inquire what results can be drawn from the success, if it proves to be an accomplished fact. The defeat of a Prussian *corps d'armée*, such as that which held Orleans, is an important success, but taken by itself it can have little influence on the general result of the campaign, and the Parisians for once accept the victory at no more than its value, and do

not conceal from themselves that at best it is but the beginning of the struggle on which the fate of France depends. When General Trochu decides to make the great effort which has so long been demanded, he will, I am convinced, be well seconded. There is a very general impression that such an effort will be attempted within a few days hence, and there are certainly many corroborating facts within my own knowledge to support the opinion. The proclamation issued on Monday is manifestly intended to brace up the *morale* both of the civil population and of the army for a supreme struggle; and I happen to know that six days' rations will be distributed to the troops to-morrow. The famous plan is therefore most likely on the brink of being launched.

The chances are against the French, as they must always be against an attacking force in presence of modern arms, but they will not be beaten for want of courage, The Mobiles and the National Guard have shown great dash and steadiness wherever they have been under fire. They have almost invariably succeeded in dislodging the Prussians at their first assault; and it must be remembered that if they have not maintained the conquered positions, no serious attempt has hitherto been made to do so.

It would be a great advantage if some of the ranting patriots who follow the standards of Blanqui, Flourens, and Pyat could be made to air their courage before the enemy when the affair comes off; but these gentlemen do not at all care to face the Prussians, and they do not scruple to announce that they "reserve their strength and their "chassepots for Paris." They offer, indeed, to march out behind the rest, in order to keep them from "flinching"; but they declare that they have too much love for the cause of liberty to allow themselves, the only true

friends of the Republic, to be sent out to slaughter. No; if they are not allowed to spur on their fellow-citizens from behind, they will await in Belleville their return, and if there should be a disaster, will enter the other quarters of the town, "and crush the traitors and cowards "who have been beaten." A nice little programme, indeed, which has the great advantage of being conveniently safe, if only it can be carried out. It is remarkable enough —or perhaps it is not remarkable at all, but, at any rate, it is a fact, that the very men who have fought with anything like constancy and courage for the defence of Republican France are precisely those who are supposed most to hate the Republic, and who are certainly most hated by its avowed supporters. Lyons and Marseilles, the very cradles of the fiercest Red Republicanism, have never stirred hand or foot against the Prussians, but have occupied their time in fighting pleasantly within their own walls, while even in Paris the Reds will not move a little finger to help the national defence. In the meantime, king-loving Vendée and God-fearing Brittany have flown to the rescue of the country; and even the Bonapartists have joined them to pour out their blood like water for the Republic.

While Flourens the Red was displaying his boots at the Hôtel de Ville, Bourbaki the Imperialist was organising the army of the North; while Blanqui was shrieking, Baroche, the son of the Napoleonic senator, was throwing away his life heroically; while Felix Pyat was telling Belleville to bide its time, Brittany was fighting for the salvation of that Paris which has always depised and tyrannised over it. The truth is that the Reds prefer the Republic to their country, and themselves to the Republic. It was not thus that their fathers did; but

we are fallen upon sadly degenerate times in France, and evil prospects.

The National Guards have hitherto been used solely for the service of the ramparts and other duties in the interior of Paris; but the new decree of the 9th will make a portion of it available for service with the regular troops and the Mobiles. Each battalion contains from 1200 to 1500 men; and of these, from 400 to 500, selected as far as possible from the young and unmarried, are formed into four war companies, which will be treated and used in every respect as ordinary troops. There has been considerable grumbling at the decree, which falls unequally upon different battalions, some of which can furnish their 400 or 500 men with ease from their young and unmarried members, while in others it has been necessary to make up with a considerable proportion of fathers of families. The measure has, however, been carried out as proposed, and finding there is no help for it, the grumblers have relapsed into silence.

Nov. 17.

A number of English newspapers, with dates up to the 3rd inst., arrived in Paris on Tuesday last, and it would seem from the various items of news they bring that the resistance in the provinces is by no means feeble, and that the Prussians have been even defeated and severely damaged at various points. The capitulation of Metz appears to be surrounded with as much suspicion and mystery in the eyes of Europe as it is in the eyes of the Parisians. There is a strong tendency here now to believe that Bazaine did really surrender before he need have done, and that the capitulation was in some way connected with an intrigue in favour of the ex-Emperor; but until further news is received the final judgment is suspended, which is another remark-

able fact to be placed to the credit of Parisian public opinion.

People are wondering what they ought to think of the strange attitude taken up by the Tours Delegation. The loan which M. Gambetta has effected, quite unknown to the Government here, is looked upon most suspiciously, partly because it is considered to have been entirely unnecessary, and partly because it has been negotiated under conditions much too unfavourable. The one thing that has never yet been wanting is money. Everybody in France, even the poorest, has a little hoard, and there is every inclination to lend it to the State. The Tours Delegation had, however, I am assured, ample funds without making any fresh appeal to the public credit.

The theatres continue to give representations daily, and the opera solaces us with excellent music two or three times a-week. Gas is, however, running somewhat short, and the Government continues to enforce great economy in its use, so that all the theatres shut up at half-past ten. The cafés, however, are allowed to remain open later, but only on condition of their being lit with oil or candles, which takes away a great part of their brilliancy and, consequently of their attractiveness. Every night there are six or eight public meetings, at which any citizen who wishes to deliver himself of oratory is certain of a reception more or less indulgent. The speeches made are generally either supremely dull or utterly absurd; very often they are both, as for instance was the case last night at the Salle Valentino, where an orator in spectacles gravely produced "the original flag of Joan of Arc," and proceeded to lecture upon it amid roars of laughter from his audience. The frequenters of these meetings go to them for the most part merely for light, shelter, and amusement, and they are already favourite places of

resort for those female "bouches inutiles" who still remain in Paris. The streets are becoming more dark and deserted at night, and even the boulevards are beginning to look as if they had come to consider the siege "ennuyeux." When that stage is reached in Paris something is certain to happen.

CHAPTER XX.

PARIS TRANSFORMED.

Nov. 17.

If one of those merry Englishmen who have known Paris only as the centre of facile pleasures, and the chosen resort of the rich and idle of Europe, could be dropped down here now, I think he would scarcely be able to credit his senses, the aspect of the town has so changed. Paris, indeed, is no longer Paris; it is not even like its former self, and for all that distinguished it from other great cities it has disappeared from the face of the earth, possibly never to return. Suppose an Englishman, however, passed by some miraculous agency over broken bridges, through the Prussian lines, and into the Gare du Nord, where so many of his compatriots are wont to arrive at this time of the year. He finds it silent and gloomy; the rails are covered with a red coat of rust, and the grass is beginning to grow between them; the carriages stand in a melancholy mass up and down the line or on obscure sidings; the familiar puff and whistle and the white clouds of steam are unseen and unheard; everything is fixed and immovable, as though the fable of the Sleeping Beauty had been repeated on the terminus of one of the most important railways in Europe. The fussy officials, in their simple blue overalls, have disappeared; the velvet-jacketed commissionaires have gone with them. The rattling luggage-truck no longer awakens the echoes of the lofty roof;

everything is silent, still, and petrified. Our Englishman, however, descends from his carriage, and the first things that strike his eye are seven gigantic balloons, painted gaudily in yellow, red, and black stripes, lying half-inflated across the whole breadth of the station, and reaching nearly to the roof. Anxious, however, to make the most of his short stay in Paris, and eager to begin his round of pleasure, he passes to the *salle d'attente des bagages.* He finds it shut up, and over the door a white flag with a red cross, and the word "ambulance," which probably frightens him away.

He then goes into the courtyard to get a carriage. The gates are closed; there is nothing in the shape of a vehicle to be seen; and in the middle of the space is a body of men in képis and black trousers with red stripes, performing insane evolutions at the short, sharp word of command of an energetic little creature in full uniform, flourishing a sabre as long and as crooked as himself. As the Englishman is looking at this with open eyes, the body breaks up into individuals, who all run at different points of vantage some to lamp-posts, others to the edge of the pavement, by which they lie down flat in the gutter, while one runs straight at the bewildered traveller. Meantime he has recognised in the individual with the sabre a porter whom he has made his own by dint of tips repeated at each of his many previous journeys, and, thinking it is about time to "take steps," goes to him and asks for the station-master. His former friend eyes him contemptuously, but, nevertheless, calls for Monsieur X., who runs up at once from the door of an office whence he has been taking shots at an imaginary enemy in the engine-house. The Englishman announces that he wants a carriage, upon which the station-master deferentially submits the case to "mon "capitaine," no other than the little fellow with the sabre.

"Mon capitaine," however, who has recognised a foreign accent, incontinently puts the Englishman under arrest, and sends him off to the nearest guardhouse, under suspicion of being a Prussian spy. That lasts him for an hour or so, and when he has pulled himself through by the help of his papers he goes off to take a bath. The baths, however, are shut up, "in consequence of the want of "water," so he proceeds to his hotel—the Grand Hotel, of course—but he finds that that also has been turned into an ambulance, and at the window he may see wounded soldiers looking out of the rooms which were once charged at such exorbitant rates. Finally, he instals himself, notwithstanding the ambulance, on the first floor, being thereto induced by the announcement that he need not pay "till the end of the siege," and goes out to get some breakfast.

Breakfast over, the Englishman pays an incredible bill for it, and wanders out upon the boulevard. He finds it moderately full of people, but nowhere does he see those types whom he has always regarded as forming the whole population of Paris. There are very few women, and those he meets are no longer the elegant, dainty creatures he remembers. They are nattily dressed, but without any pretension to luxury; in fact, for the most part, much as his sister's lady's-maid would dress. The men are almost without exception in half uniform, and although there are a few drinking a hasty *demi-tasse* in the *cafés*, most of them walk along in a hurried manner, which shows they are out for an object, and not for a saunter. A number of shops are shut up, and bear the inscription, "Fermé pour cause de service dans la Garde Nationale." There is not a single private equipage to be seen, but the road is filled nevertheless with carts, fiacres, and omnibuses, which are every now and then enveloped in long trains of military waggons,

driven by soldiers with chassepots slung behind their backs, while an incessant drumming and trumpeting announce the passage of long lines of citizen soldiers, arrayed in every variety of modified uniform, marching along to a sounding chorus of the "Marseillaise." The Champs Elysées have lost that perpetual air of *fête* which is habitual to them. The little stalls are shut up, Punchinello's theatre is in the same condition, and the merry-go-rounds are in a state of melancholy stand-still, while the alleys and pathways are occupied by more National Guards struggling with the difficulties of company and skirmishing drill. Our Englishman remembers, however, that Paris only really begins to live at dusk, and expects, perhaps, that the evening will restore to him the city he knows and has liked so well. But not at all. The *cafés* are dimly lit with only one-third their usual supply of gas, there are at most three or four theatres open, and if he goes to one of them he will find everybody in sombre attire, listening probably to an intolerably dull speech on the means of subsistence. When he is turned out, in consequence of the extinction of gas, at half-past ten o'clock, military time, he finds the *cafés* worse than ever—most of them shut up entirely, and the rest struggling with darkness by the insufficient aid of oil lamps, the dim yellow light of which is lost almost before it has travelled a couple of yards. Here and there on the boulevards crowds are discussing the last news and the next probabilities; but before the clock strikes eleven they are all dispersed, and our Englishman, wondering at the revolution which has swept away all that pleasure and frivolity which once made Paris so delightful a sojourning place, takes his solitary way home, where he probably breaks his shins over a number of barrels and heaps of sand placed in the courtyard as a "precaution against the effects of "bombardment." As he stays on he will probably be

arrested every day for his suspicious appearance, and awoke every night by the cannon; and his only chance of excitement will be the arrival of English newspapers, his only pleasure a few rare invitations to "drop in in the evening "to tea with cream, or to dine with cheese and butter."

All this, however, is matter of small moment at the present time. The graces and pleasures of life can scarcely be cultivated in a besieged city, and for all that is really material we are by no means badly off. It is astonishing how soon and how easily one shakes off that slight external coating of prejudices which civilised life makes one think almost a second nature. Incredible as it may seem, it really is very easy to forego theatres and pleasures, and to eat donkey and rat, and to go to bed early without social excitement. Indeed, it is almost shameful to give a thought to such things when the great possibility of actual and absolute starvation is afoot. There is, I fear, considerable misery among the poor already, but I do not apprehend that it will increase. On the contrary, it may be expected to diminish, for it is certain that there are ample supplies of provisions in Paris. The only difficulty is to distribute them fairly and equally. Meat is scarce, no doubt. The principal restaurants furnish an unlimited supply to their customers, but those who cannot afford restaurant prices and who live at home have to content themselves with the rations, half a pound English every three days for each person. The working classes are feeling the effects of the siege less than might have been expected, but they are feeling them nevertheless. Most of them are in the National Guard, and get their thirty sous a-day, and that is more than enough to keep a single man comfortably. But where there is a family it is very hard to make both ends meet, even with the assistance that the Government now offers in the way of distributions of food, and the resource of cheap

living at the *cantines nationales*. There is very little work doing, and consequently very little chance for workmen to add to their thirty sous, but as yet they have managed to exist without very great suffering, and they show no signs of flinching; on the contrary, they, and those who speak for them, are the first to demand resistance to the very last. I still think, however, that there will be a *dénouement* of one kind or the other before many days are over. Hitherto the negotiations have delayed and relaxed the purely military action of the Government, and, as I am told that the Great Powers are still continuing their efforts at Versailles, that may explain the postponement of active efforts which has taken place. Preparations, however, continue on every side, and, unless diplomacy does something serious for us, we shall, I am convinced, shortly have a great fight under the walls of Paris.

There is a rumour here that the Army of the Loire has advanced to and occupied Etampes, but it is not generally credited. Several pigeons have arrived from Tours, and one of them brings a confirmation of the recapture of Orleans.

M. Thiers, who was believed to be still at Versailles, is reported as having returned to Tours on the 7th, and to be engaged on a memorandum for European perusal.

We have not sent away a balloon now for a week, but one is expected to leave this evening.

Nov. 19.

Last night I was allowed as a great favour, and chiefly, I believe, under cover of the theory that I was connected with the postal service, to witness the departure of a balloon. It took place from the Gare du Nord, which we found utterly deserted and perfectly dark. We picked our way to the open, and there came upon the balloon, a huge globe of pale yellow colour, shining in the light of a

number of lanterns placed around it on the ground, and covered with fantastic shadows of the workmen engaged in holding it on the ground by the network, which they allowed to rise a foot at a time as the inflation proceeded. Around these hovered dark figures wrapped up against the cold night air; at one spot were three large sacks containing the mails, at another five basket cages in which were some thirty soft blue pigeons, who seemed to look out curiously at the proceedings. The *nacelle* stood next the pigeons—not an inviting vehicle for a voyage through the air, for it was simply a flat, square basket, the height of a man's waist, with just room enough for two people to sit or rather to squat in it. The preparations were under charge of a naval officer, who, after the manner of boatswains, first gave his order and then blew a whistle to have it executed "all together." At length the balloon had risen from the ground to its full height and size, and the men surrounding it were called to the centre, holding on to the netting to which the car was made fast. Then the bags of letters and the pigeon baskets were hung on outside the car, the two passengers got inside, and the fatal word was given, "Lâchez tout." We all held our breath to see the balloon shoot up; but the rain which had been falling the whole evening had made it heavy, and it refused to stir. Some bags of sand, however, were thrown out, and finally the balloon rose slowly and majestically from the ground and disappeared in the fog, amidst cries of "Vive la République!"

A despatch dated the 13th, which arrived yesterday from Tours, and which is published this morning, brings further confirmation of the capture of Orleans, and gives the number of Prussian prisoners made as 2500. It is not a bad beginning, and d'Aurelles de Paladine is naturally the hero of the moment. One of his former comrades in arms

tells me that he is a "soldier all over and before all"; that he is very active, very strict in the minor details of organisation, which are generally neglected in the French army; and, above all, that he has the "rage of discipline." If so, he would seem to be possessed of precisely the qualities required to make the French forces reliable and manageable. It would be a strange coincidence if salvation should again come out of Orleans; the more remarkable because France is, *mutatis mutandis*, as nearly as possible in the same desperate situation as when the Maid of Domrémy appeared. It would be an advantage for other reasons that a great reputation should, if it be so, be built up outside Paris, for what with Trochu and "the Government of "the seventy-three lawyers," as it is called, we have here quite enough notorieties. The question also is beginning to be seriously discussed whether it is absolutely necessary that Paris should be the seat of the French Government; and, though the Parisians affect to laugh at it, I find among the provincials who are here a strong disposition to support the transfer of the centre of power to Tours or Bourges. Paris is revolutionary for revolution's sake, and the provinces are precisely the reverse. There is generally an utter disagreement between them as to the Government that is desired, or that is in existence; for that kind which Paris most loves the provinces most fear. If, therefore, it is argued, we are to have permanence founded upon the general consent of the country, we must deprive Paris of that command over the central cluster of power which has hitherto enabled it to give its own Governments to France. There is much weight in the argument, and we shall hear more of it when a National Assembly shall once again have been brought together.

An order of the day is published against the marauders. A vast number of them have hitherto issued from the gates

every morning, to return laden with vegetables pulled up from the ground between the lines of the two armies, and sometimes with valuables and furniture taken from the deserted houses. The Prussians have generally not interfered, but within the last few days they have taken to firing on these poor wretches—women and children half of them—and two mornings ago they killed as many as twenty-six, and wounded a great many more. Strictly speaking, they may have the right to visit with death the pulling up of potatoes, but to ordinary minds it seems an infamous proceeding to shoot down women and children. Prussian pretensions, however, are enormous. They positively assume to consider as a violation of "the laws of war" any attempt made by Frenchmen to defend their own lives and property, and massacre without mercy and in cold blood anybody who stirs a finger against them, while they burn any town that is unable to satisfy the kind of robbery they call requisition.

Nov. 20.

I rode out this morning towards the outposts opposite Sèvres. The day was wet and cheerless, and as I approached the Point du Jour I found the streets almost deserted; one reason of which is that as this part of the town is within range of the Prussian positions many of the inhabitants have left their houses. The Point du Jour, which bulges out in an angle on the south-western side of Paris, has always been considered the most exposed spot of the defences, commanded as it is at a distance of 3300 yards by the heights which rise steeply on the opposite side of the Seine. It was almost open when the siege began, but it is now formidably defended. The railway, which here runs on a viaduct inside the walls, has been made into a second line of defence, with a ditch in front, and the whole ground about has been mined. Outside the ramparts the houses are still standing

within a distance of eighty yards of the wall; but here, too, all is mined, and the whole ground could be blown up at will, with everything on it. Billancourt, a small village immediately beyond, I found, of course, exclusively occupied by the soldiers, entrenched behind barricades of a more formidable character than is usual, which would enable them to dispute the position with effect. Moreover, the Seine is just beyond them and on their left, so that it would be extremely difficult for the Prussians to make an impression there, even if they had silenced the batteries and demolished the ramparts of the Point du Jour. The sentries line the river's bank, taking occasional shots at each other from either side; but the Prussians are very difficult to hit, as they never show more than the tips of their noses or the spikes of their helmets. On the side on which I was the desolating hand of war was everywhere visible; but, looking across the river to the heights, it seemed almost impossible to believe that war was there too. The hills were covered with trees, still luxuriant and green, and sprinkled as it were with the fresh white houses to which the Parisians were wont, in better times, to retire for a country life and a fair prospect. The Prussians were as quiet as they were invisible. "Ils sont "allés à la prêche," said a corporal; "how curious that "they should be so fond of it." The French outposts were engaged in the very different occupation of teaching some recruits the calls with drum and clarion on the lawn of what had once been a charming little country house, now inhabited by the Mobiles, who seem to make a point of beginning their stay anywhere by breaking all windows and wrenching all doors off their hinges. Such an earsplitting discord as these drummers and trumpeters were making I never heard, and I was glad enough to get out of their neighbourhood.

On my road back I met a long team of waggons with the days' bread, which smelt fresh and appetising. That is an article of food which will not fail for many months; and very glad I am of it, for Parisian bread is excellent, and that which is served out to the troops especially has a most delicious aroma of wheat. We continue to eat horse and donkey, and even rat has its admirers; but those who indulge in those strange meats do it partly from curiosity, and partly that they may be able to think themselves heroically starving. Certainly there is at present no need to go beyond the beef and mutton of ordinary days. It appears that the Government requisition of cattle has produced unhoped-for results, and there is a large amount of live stock in private hands. I have a friend, for instance, who possesses two sheep and a pig, and I am happy to say that I am on the best of terms with him, as well as with another who has got a cow and produces fresh butter. Birds of all kinds are very scarce, and the sportsmen are reduced to such desperation that they have positively taken to going out shooting in the streets. This is inconvenient, for the sportsmen have already broken a large number of windows, and it is irritating to have, as I did yesterday, a gun suddenly fired off close to one's ear in a quiet square. The sparrow aimed at escaped, I need hardly say, with far less of a fright than the bystanders.

Nov. 21.

English newspapers have arrived through Mr. Washburn this morning with dates to the 10th. They seem to show that English policy is precisely what it has been since the beginning of the war—one of intense regret at the effusion of blood, and of equally intense determination to do nothing that might be effectual to stop it. Success has always been a divinity in our islands, but the English people must have strangely changed if they can see unmoved this gallant

nation standing at bay without armies, without arms, without generals, and even without a Government, against the overwhelming forces that are now doing their utmost to crush the life out of it. I suppose nobody can now deny or doubt that Prussia is waging war for the conquest of Alsace and Lorraine. To talk about those two provinces being necessary as guarantees of Prussian security is only to talk the language that all international spoilers have always used, and which in this instance is nonsense into the bargain. Prussia seeks to dismember France, and to that end she is robbing and plundering the country, and shooting like dogs all who have the courage to defend themselves, as though that were a crime. To that end she has invested Paris, to that end refused to admit an armistice, and to that end she will evade as long as she can, and, if that is no longer possible, will haughtily refuse the intervention of neutral Powers. Who will blame France for resisting ?—or is there any who will blame her because the odds are against her ? I fancy few in England, because I think there is no Englishman who would not resist the conquest by a foreign Power of any portion of our own country.

But blame or praise, this is certain, that France will never submit to dismemberment any more than England would, till the last chance of resistance is exhausted. If her two provinces are torn from her, she will only wait to bind up her wounds before she begins the struggle anew, and those statesmen—if any there be—are short-sighted indeed who think that any lasting peace can be made upon such a basis.

The *Journal Officiel* publishes a number of the Prussian newspaper, the *Moniteur Officiel du Seine et Oise*, which contains a circular, written on the 8th, by M. de Bismarck, to Prussian representatives abroad. The document is a

miracle of cool impudence, which is really refreshing to read. The Chancellor knew that the revictualling of Paris was always made by the French Government an essential condition of the armistice, for he admitted it and made it a grievance in his own circular of the 27th September. Yet he positively has the assurance to say that he "was "astonished" to find M. Thiers reviving this condition, and he gives this as a serious answer to the serious efforts made by the four Powers (who, if they are content with it, must be easily pleased indeed), and thereupon founds the insinuation that the French Government rejected the armistice "because "it does not seriously wish to allow the opinion of the French "people to express itself." The whole circular is a piece of "chaff" of France and of the four Powers, but the "chaff" rests upon a structure of insincerity which will no doubt be appreciated in Europe. As for France, she is no worse off now, as regards her position before the enemy, than she would be if a National Assembly were actually sitting at this moment; for as long as Prussia insists upon having Alsace and Lorraine no Frenchman or French Assembly will make peace before France is utterly crushed —which she is not yet by any means, whatever may be said or thought to the contrary.

Nov. 22.

Jules Favre's reply to Bismarck's circular is published this morning. It is a great improvement upon his last, more dignified in style, and altogether more like the production of a statesman. He declares that England and the other Powers, when they made the proposal for an armistice (for, as he points out, it was they, and not M. Thiers or France, who made it), always considered that it must be an armistice with proportional revictualling, which, as I have already remarked, M. de Bismarck himself also knew. M. Favre says as to the judgment on the negotiations, and

the conduct of the Government, "A cette heure suprème " il s'en remettrait volontiers au jugement de ceux dont la " voix bienveillante n'a pas été écoutée." As to the insinuation embodied by Bismarck in his circular, Jules Favre repels it with dignity, and declares that the Government is "prêt à réunir une assemblée si un armistice avec ravi- " taillement le lui permet."

We are beginning to be short of light, if not yet of food. A decree appears this morning to the effect that from the 30th November the gas will be entirely cut off from all buildings whether public or private, and will be reserved for the lighting of the streets and the filling of balloons. There will be no great hardship in this, as the want will be easily met by the use of oil and candles, which are already resorted to after seven o'clock every evening. To-day several of the *régiments de marche* of the National Guard are out. They look like real soldiers in their new uniform dress of the long blue redingote and red-striped trousers. Their appearance is in all respects admirable. They are, in fact, the very flower of Parisian youth and courage, and ought to fight well when called upon. The Prussians yesterday tried to pass the Canal de l'Ourcq between Bondy and Le Bourget, but were easily repulsed. There is a rumour to-day that Choisy le Roi had been retaken by the French, but it is not believed.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOCIAL LIFE.

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Nov. 23.

THE social organisation has been so utterly broken down by the siege, and so entirely recast, that every-day life is one series of startling contrasts, which, if ever the picture of it is faithfully drawn, must produce the strangest and most incredible effects of drawing and perspective. Take the ladies, for instance. They no longer dazzle us with splendid toilettes, and that sparkling chatter on the merest trifles which makes French so beautiful a language in the female lips. They are now dressed, without exception, in sombre and modest attire, which makes them look like refined upper-housemaids. They pass their time in mixing tisanes, administering medicines, and carrying about trays full of surgical appliances at the heels of doctors, whom they would have considered in former times by no means sufficiently well-bred even to be admitted to acquaintance. They have no time for flirtation, and if they indulge in talk—which, happily, they are incapable of refraining from altogether—their conversation is of the army of the Loire, the attitude of England, or the last circular of M. de Bismarck, or else of the dear ones who are shut up in Prussian prisons. They quarrel with each other, of course; but their little disagreements no longer turn upon men, toilettes, and invitations, but upon the great questions of ambulance administration, and the functions and attributes

of presidents and committee-men. They are delighted with this new life, which has for the first time brought out the woman in them; and it is delightful to see them flitting silently about from bed to bed, tending with light hands the rough soldiers whom war has thrown into their charge.

The men have been subjected to still greater changes. The absence of the red stripe down the trousers which denotes the National Guardsman is quite exceptional; and among those who formerly composed the *jeunesse dorée* of the capital there is not to be met one who is not in some corps, and who has not had his share of the dangers of battle. I belong to a club which occupies here a position somewhat between those which Arthur's and the Athenæum hold in London, and it is amusing to hear the conversation at dinner. "Couldn't possibly come last night, for I "was on guard, and this morning we made a little recon- "naissance. Que voulez-vous?—on s'ennuie, and one "must do some damage to the Prussians. I have been "lying in a ditch for two hours to-day, but I believe I "brought down one fellow. After all, it is quite a delight- "ful sport, and especially when one knows that one can "come here and spend the evening like a civilised creature. "What bores me is that my sergeant is my *concierge*. He "drinks a good deal at the wine-shop of our quarter, and "so he was known, and so, ma foi, they elected him. "Fancy, I was obliged to ask his permission to come and "dine; but then he knows that if he didn't give it he "wouldn't have the honour of blacking my boots very "long. We've a lot of fellows in my company who are "delighted to have a gentleman under their thumb: the "brutes put me, the other night, on the ramparts, in the "the wettest place they could find, and left me there for "three hours instead of two. They thought it an excellent

"joke, and the captain is with them—he is a seller of "fowls, and he has a grudge against me because my cook "wouldn't deal with him. A second helping of bison "hump! why, my dear fellow, I shall have to denounce "you for wasting provisions in time of siege." Thus speaks the dandy, and that without any affectation. The situation is novel and exciting, and he accepts it rather as a piece of good fortune than otherwise.

The most striking change of all, however, is that which the siege has effected in the conditions of life of the poorer classes. The workman no longer rises early to spend his day in toil—all he has to do is to attend his National Guard drill, to mount his guard twice a-week, and to walk about in his uniform. For this he gets fifteenpence a-day, while his wife receives from the mairie tenpence a-day for herself and fivepence for each of her children. With these sums they can live in comparative comfort, and are better off in all respects than they ever were in time of peace. The idle, flashy life which results from this system is quite to the taste of the Parisian workman, but it has developed some of his latent vices to an extraordinary extent. Nobody, for instance, will do any work. The Government, which offers six francs a-day for unskilled labour, finds it impossible to get men even at that rate, and private employers are still worse off; so that, for instance, a bootmaker requires a month to make a pair of boots, and will not absolutely promise them then. Idleness and drunkenness always go together, and I suppose there never was a time when the latter vice was so common in Paris. The National Guards are drunk upon the ramparts, the workmen drunk all about the streets, and even the *cochers de fiacre* are drunk upon their boxes, to an extent that is really astonishing. It is the thirty sous pay that does it all. They are so easily earned, and it is so pleasing to

carry them off to the wine-shop. These thirty sous will constitute a formidable difficulty when the war is over, for the recipients have already come to consider that they have a right to State pay, and will strongly resist its withdrawal.

The outside aspect of Paris is as changed as the inner life of its inhabitants, and as the siege lengthens out the change becomes more strongly pronounced. A few theatres are open, and occasionally the opera solaces us with music (chiefly German); but it may be said that all that was effective and amusing about Paris has been stripped off, and left only an underneath machinery of bare every-day life, not at all different from that of any town of fifteenth class and pretensions. Indeed, the deprivation of news makes us worse off than the meanest of provincial towns in any civilised country. It is fortunate that the Americans have not, like the English and the rest, been frightened out of their legation, for it is through them alone that we get anything like detailed intelligence. Count Bismarck appears to allow them a courier once a week, and at those intervals Mr. Washburn, who is amiable and accessible to an extent which would frighten an English Ambassador out of his propriety, generally has a number of English and American newspapers to show to his friends. The balloons continue to rise and pigeons come in again now pretty regularly, carrying the Government despatches, and generally from five to six hundred private telegrams each bird. The foggy weather has been against them, but for the last few days we have had sun and clear sky, and the pigeons have arrived two, three, and four a-day. It appears that three of the balloons have been captured by the enemy, who have sent the passengers to Germany to be tried by a Council of War, as though they were in the same case as the spy who steals through an enemy's lines in disguise.

They are quite capable of shooting them, but such a proceeding would be simply monstrous, and it is to be hoped that a milder course will be adopted.

The Prussians continue their system of investment, pure, simple, and inoffensive. They have attempted once or twice a night surprise, but have always been easily repulsed, and at present everything is perfectly quiet on the whole line of advanced posts. In some places the opposing sentries have even fraternised. A few days since the friendly relations between the two armies were pushed so far that the Prussian officers invited the French to a dinner, which was accepted and eaten in the greatest good-fellowship in a small villa between the lines, but which has been followed by a very severe order from General Trochu, which is not likely to encourage other officers to repeat such proceedings. The Franc-tireurs by no means understand such courtesies; they go out nightly to stalk Prussian sentries, and keep them in a perpetual state of irritation. Nor only them, for these free corps have not learnt to keep their hands from picking and stealing, and a large proportion of the pillage which has taken place around Paris is due to them. The great sortie has been again postponed, and it is now entirely a matter of speculation when it will take place. The time is being well employed, however. Fresh cannon are being delivered every day, and the war companies of the National Guard are now almost all equipped and ready to march; some of them have, indeed, already been despatched to the front as a preliminary training. Knowing as I do only too well the National Guard, the martial attitude and bearing of these war companies surprise me most agreeably. In drill and discipline they seem to me by no means inferior to the line, while in *physique* they are certainly much superior. Seven companies were reviewed on the boulevard yesterday, and they

looked fit for anything. They are, indeed, the pick of the population of Paris, and as there will be in a few days fifty thousand of them ready to go into action, they ought to prove a most valuable addition to the available forces.

Nov. 24.

Yesterday afternoon two pigeons arrived from Orleans, bringing as many as 1100 private telegraphic despatches, besides a public one from Gambetta, dated the 16th. He announces that "the most perfect order reigns through-"out the country"; that Orleans is still strongly occupied; and that the European Powers are very sympathetic, and all agreed in blaming Bismarck's refusal to allow Paris to be re-victualled as a condition of an armistice. There had been rumours here that Orleans had been retaken by the Prussians; but as one of the pigeons only left that town yesterday morning, it is clear that at that time it was still occupied by the French. The situation is held to be decidedly improving. There is at any rate no doubt that it is far better than it was two months ago, and there is equally no doubt that the obstinate resistance of Paris has, as was expected, given the country time to bring its resources together, and to present a new front to the invader. I have little doubt that Paris can hold out, as far as food is concerned, to the middle of February without great suffering, or even any very great inconvenience; and it will be strange, indeed, if the Prussians are left at their ease round the capital during that time. There are men enough in France to eat up the Prussian army, if only chiefs could be found capable of leading them; and it will go hard with King William and his troops if they should experience a reverse, and have to make a retreat in the winter. What is quite clear is that France is not beaten, nor near being beaten, yet.

General Schmitz must be a very foolish old gentleman, if we may judge of him from the manner in which he writes his orders of the day; and it is not a little astonishing that Trochu should allow such productions to be published by the chief of his staff under his authority. After elevating Sergeant Hoff to a pinnacle of glory because he had "killed "*about* thirty Prussians," and celebrated the capture of six poor Bavarians as though it were a glorious victory, General Schmitz has to-day published an order of the day telling us pompously that a company of *carabiniers Parisiens*, which found a sum of 3600 francs in a private house at Courbevoie, did *not* steal it, but handed it over to the authorities. If this kind of thing goes on it will be a perfect disgrace to be mentioned in orders. The whole of the Governmental literature, indeed, appears to be very badly looked after; the decrees and orders are confused and ambiguous, and almost always require an explanation two or three times their own length, while the official language is to the last degree trivial, and has more than once been ornamented even with puns which would distress a fifth-rate writer of English burlesques. This morning there is a decree published forbidding all newspapers to "publish "anything relative to the movement of troops, the works "of fortification, or the military measures taken by the "defence." The phrase is as elastic as possible, and if the decree is applied as it is written it must include General Schmitz's orders. They, however, would be no great loss.

The correspondence that gets through to the outer world from Paris must, I should think, appear under a very singular aspect. The peculiarity of the situation is that what interests us most here is the news from outside: that is what we talk about and think upon, and it is with reference to that that all things here live and move. While we are

guessing at the news, however, and picking up, now from a pigeon, now from a stray newspaper, scraps of intelligence, those outside are living in the full light of it; and our reflections must have about the same interest that the remarks of a blind man would have for one who sees. Somebody has said that it would be a great advantage if posterity would only pronounce its judgments in our own day, and for many purposes the outside world is able just now to do that for Paris, for it gets Parisian opinions, and acts under the light of the subsequent events which justify or condemn them. Just now everybody here is in greatly improved spirits, for it is thought that Fortune, if she has not taken a turn, is, at any rate, now beginning for the first time to waver between the two hosts that are fighting over this fair land of France. Orleans really was taken on the 11th—we can no longer doubt that now—taken after a hard fight, and with a large number of prisoners; and we know that it was still held, at any rate, yesterday morning, for a pigeon was then despatched thence which reached Paris last night. Moreover, later in the evening a rumour circulated that the Prussians had been again beaten in two battles also fought near Orleans, and to-day the report is repeated with the additional circumstance that the news has been confirmed by a private pigeon. It is a rumour as yet, and nothing more, but men's countenances have already begun to brighten a little, and their courage to rise.

Probably there is bad news of which we know nothing to set against this; but it must be admitted that when a city has been closely invested as this has now been for sixty-eight days, and has thus been deprived of all power of taking any but a distorted general view of things, there is every kind of excuse, either for undue depression or undue elation. Moreover, it is not a little creditable that

the spirit of the inhabitants has been so untouched by the siege as is the case; that, instead of being at all discouraged, they are more resolved than ever to resist to the last; and that they hail the successes of the Army of the Loire, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the country at large. One certain result of this war will be to destroy that worship of the capital which has hitherto obtained in France, and which has been so greatly intensified by the system of centralisation. The provinces have learnt that they can live without Paris. Even Paris itself no longer believes, or affects to believe, that it is France; and it regards itself now only as a barrier, just as Strasburg and Metz were barriers, which it is important to keep standing against the invader. If France comes out of this dark hour with honour and without dismemberment, she will begin her national life afresh, upon new bases, under the rule of entirely new ideas of local and individual self-reliance, which will change the face of the country.

CHAPTER XXII.

CACHAN AND LES HAUTES BRUYÈRES.

Nov. 25.

On the northern side of Paris there is a little river called the Bièvre, which runs in a northerly direction from the country between Fort Bicêtre and Fort Montrouge right up to the ramparts, and through them into the city, within which it falls into the Seine. It drains a valley which, at a short distance from the walls, and before it reaches the forts, is narrowed and deepened on the one side by the heights of Bagneux and Châtillon, and on the other by the almost isolated hill bearing the name of Les Hautes Bruyères, which shows a steep front both to the valley by its side and to the open country in front. This valley of the Bièvre and Les Hautes Bruyères form a position which appears to possess considerable attractions for General Trochu. It is besides one of those which is most closely watched and most nearly approached by the enemy, and this morning I visited it.

I have generally found it best to go on these expeditions alone, for I find that a single individual can, with a little assurance and temper, go almost anywhere. The difficulties of circulation among the advanced posts seem to increase daily. Every ten yards one is stopped by a sentry, who generally has a preconceived determination to send one back which has to be vanquished. Any one of these little negotiations would be ruined by an imprudent

OUT-POST DUTY

word or gesture, and most probably the net result would be at least a night in the guard-house. I was, however, upon this occasion in company with a French gentleman, upon whose coolness and discretion I could rely; and who, having promised me a breakfast with the Dominican *frères* at Arcueil, was a valuable ally.

We left the Porte d'Italie at eight o'clock on foot, for it was impossible to go where we proposed in any other way. It is remarkable how soon a new order of things takes a permanent aspect. The earthworks round the Porte d'Italie are already covered with green turf. The zig-zag road, which a fortnight ago was ankle-deep in mud, is now paved, and was being swept by a man thereto appointed, and the pathway was even sanded, all which gave the works quite an air of civilisation and decency. We turned off to the right, over the ruins of what had once been houses surrounding the ramparts. There, too, time had already been at work. The rain had washed away the rubbish or covered it up smoothly with earth, and it is only by the appearance at intervals of an obstinate line of stone foundations, or of the sill of a door which looks as if it had no right to be there, that the passer-by can guess that he is walking over a spot which, three short months ago, was crowded with human habitations.

In a few minutes we came at the bottom of the hill to the Bièvre. It was a strange and desolate sight. The channel through the ramparts has been stopped up, and the little river has here spread itself over the valley in a plain of water, from out which arise abruptly the roofs of submerged houses, while all around the surface of the inundation is covered with a tangled floating mass of trees and débris of various kinds. The bridge still stands above the water, and we crossed it into the suburb of Gentilly, the houses of which

are still standing; but that is all that can be said of them, for windows and doors have in most cases disappeared, and nothing is left but the bare shell of the buildings. Following the course of the Bièvre by the road along its left bank, we finally came to Arcueil, a little village lying on the flank of a hill somewhat in advance of Fort Montrouge. It is quite safe from the Prussians, but very few of the inhabitants have remained in it.

The streets are occupied by Moblots, and they have also taken possession of all the convenient houses, from the windows of which they indulge in their rough jokes across the silent streets. Here it was that we found our friends the Dominicans in a large building, formerly a private château, but subsequently turned into the College of Albert le Grand, and now used as an ambulance, which contains a score of wounded men. Our host, the Père B——, was not to be found; he had been tempted to Les Hautes Bruyères to breakfast with the officers off a turkey—a fact which was related with an air which showed that the glory of that turkey was felt to be reflected more or less upon the whole community. But we were very hospitably received, and regaled with a thoroughly monastic repast of cabbage, peas, and salad, to which was added for our special behoof half a box of sardines. The Dominicans struck me by their physiognomy, which was varied and most intelligent. One of them might have sat for Chaucer's friar, so jovial, and ruddy, and plump was he; while another, in his white-flannel hood, with piercing black eyes and pale face, looked the very ideal of an ascetic.

Leaving the ambulance, we descended through the village under a long range of poles, now bare, but on which in better times the numerous washerwomen of the place hung out their linen to dry, to the foot of the aqueduct,

which here runs on brick arches of enormous height in a long line across the valley. At the archway there was a barricade with a Moblot sentry—a Vendéan, who looked very picturesque in his goat-skin overcoat. Here the usual conversation took place. It was impossible to let us pass, but we could speak to the sergeant. The sergeant agreed as to the impossibility, and made nothing of our laisser-passer, but we could speak to the captain. The captain we induced to let us through, but only as a personal favour, which he seemed to consider quite a dereliction of duty. This scene was repeated at every sentry, and upon one occasion we seemed to have really been brought to a dead stop, from which, however, we extricated ourselves by appealing to General Mand'huy, who fortunately happened to pass at the right moment.

Beyond the aqueduct we followed the road for some time, past barricades without number, and at Cachan struck through a house and garden into the fields, where we found the Moulin Cachan standing down in the low ground on the Bièvre, which, when the mill still ground corn, furnished the motive power.

From the side of the mill, crossing the valley, ran a high wall, along which were posted sentries at a distance of not more than ten yards apart. They were perched upon little stagings and mounds of earth; and through the loop-holes which had been roughly knocked in the wall were keeping a bright look-out over the country beyond, and trying to detect the movements of the Prussian sentries, who were only some 200 yards off; but, as usual, they were too well hidden to be seen except for an instant, and at long intervals. The mill itself presented a very picturesque scene. Behind it the stream was tumbling out of an archway over the stones, as though it were delighted at having for a time escaped the teeth of the miller's wheel, and a

luxurious Moblot was washing in it his one pair of socks, standing meantime barefooted in the mud. The courtyard was filled with piles of arms, and with a whole company of Vendéan Mobiles—fine big fellows, with the simplest, gentlest faces in the world. Their captain did us the honours of the mill, bowing us with easy grace into the convenient breach which now does duty as a door. The ground floor was devoted to cooking, and while the chosen cooks were lovingly stirring the lumps of salt bacon simmering in the kettles, or pulling them out with their fingers to see if they were getting on tenderly, a number of others stood around, telling how and when they had fired their "first shot," and questioning whether the captain had really hit the Prussians just now. The room had no windows, and was therefore in obscurity, made worse by clouds of pungent smoke; but the cooking fires, which were lit after Mobile fashion (followed even where there is a grate to be found) on the floor against the wall, threw a rich flickering light over the bronzed faces of the Moblots, and seemed to intensify that peculiar, wistful expression which the French peasant always wears, even when he is, as these were, making his best attempts to be merry. Through a doorway the glare fell upon the huge mill-wheel, and half revealed a yawning chasm below, whence arose the rippling of the water. On the opposite side of the room another doorway led to the staircase—one of the most ingenious constructions for breaking necks that it is possible to conceive. The two upper stories were ornamented with windows, but as they looked out towards the Prussians they were half blocked up, and at each one was a Mobile watching the country. The captain begged me not to pass near the windows, but on the opposite side of the room. "The "Prussians," he said, "have killed two of our men to-day,

"and wounded three others, and they are certain to fire "if they see anything move. As for us, we want to "steady our men, and we won't let them fire at single "sentries; it is difficult, though, to keep them from doing "it. Although we know the Prussians are behind that "house, and in holes along the field, we very seldom see "them; and when one does put his head out, it is tempt- "ing enough to make a chassepot go off of itself." I scanned the country closely with my glass, and could nowhere detect a sign of a human being. Not a blade of grass was stirring, but the very stillness and silence of the fields seemed to betray the presence of a wary and watchful enemy, while every now and then a sharp report came clearly to us, and a little white cloud of smoke rising and spreading slowly in the calm air afforded still more conclusive evidence of his existence. The captain's last injunction as he left the room was, "Surtout ne tirez "pas," and to it one Prussian probably owes his life, for he suddenly rose from out the ground as it seemed, and ran like a rabbit round the corner of a small house not three hundred yards off—"a beautiful shot," I could not help saying to myself. The Mobile by my side had his finger on the trigger, but to his credit he did not fire, though he put down his chassepot with a very deep sigh, as of a man who has been deprived of a splendid opportunity. "Ah! "le cochon!" said he, bitterly, and to this moment I am not certain that he did not mean his captain. Shooting sentries, however, is poor work, and the Franc-tireurs do quite enough of it to keep the Prussians awake.

Leaving the mill and the Bièvre behind us, we now climbed the steep hill of Les Hautes Bruyères. We were obliged, in order to take the nearest and cleanest road, to leave the shelter of the wall, and as we rose on the hill we were of course exposed to the Prussians—a fact which did

not tend to make us loiter on our way. Under such circumstances one doesn't like to run; the predominating feeling is one of curiosity to see whether the enemy will fire at one, and perhaps the next reflection is that there is somebody looking on. When we struck a covered trench, however, we jumped into it pretty sharply, and followed it up to the top of the hill. I had already been there seven weeks ago, and at that time there were several batteries of field artillery on the heights, defended by slight earthworks, but now I scarcely recognised the place. The position of Les Hautes Bruyères is naturally excellent, but the enormous works which have now been constructed have made it, humanly speaking, impregnable.

These works deserve to be called, not a redoubt, but a fort. Formed of the half-sandy, half-clayey earth—splendid stuff for the purpose—and finished with mathematical accuracy, they stand like a yellow crown on the crest of the hill, and command not only the valley of the Bièvre, and Bourge la Reine on the other side, but also L'Hay and Chevilly, which they can knock to pieces at will, and all the broad plain beyond. Of this I had a decisive proof. The Prussians had been firing long and heavy bullets, as big as a man's thumb, from *fusils de rempart* out of the church tower of Chevilly, and had managed to kill a man in the redoubt. The order was therefore given to dislodge them from the tower, which is about 1600 yards off, and this is what happened. The first shell knocked the upper corner off the tower and exploded, throwing up a cloud of dust and stones; the second also struck it at the base, as we saw by the explosion; the third crashed clean through the clock in the centre, and exploded with a terrible rattle inside; while the fourth, so far as I could judge (for I was watching the tower through my glass), went in at the door, and also exploded inside. This may

be, as M. de Bismarck says, "an incomprehensible "waste of ammunition," but it is not such bad practice.

I remained some time scanning the plain, and on the road from Versailles to Choisy could see the Prussian convoys marching leisurely along, followed by a squadron of cavalry. A little later I saw nothing less than a chariot drawn by a pair of horses make its appearance on the same road, which set us all guessing what important personage could be thus luxuriously progressing.

We returned to Paris along the ridge of the valley, and met two battalions of the *compagnies de guerre* of the National Guard going out to take their turn of outpost duty. They looked very much more like business than I could have believed possible a week ago, and their restless, intelligent faces make them a strong contrast to the Mobiles.

Nov. 26.

The great sortie which has been so long expected has been postponed from day to day for very sufficient reasons, and I understand that we may have still to wait some little time for it; but the sounds of preparation have revived in a way which would seem to indicate that something is now close at hand. To-day a decree is published which from to-morrow morning closes the gates absolutely and entirely against all persons whatever, except soldiers, engineer officers, and workmen specially sent out. The measure is said to have been rendered necessary by the communications which are kept up with the enemy. A similar order was made upwards of two months ago, but vegetables are stronger than orders, and it has not been strictly enforced, as it will be, I am told, henceforth. I shall be able to judge for myself in a few hours, however, as I purpose to go out early to reconnoitre on the eastern side.

The National Guard has received its baptism of fire. Yesterday the two war companies of the 72nd battalion went out to Bondy, charged a barricade, and took part of the village; after which they retired, as is usual. They behaved with coolness under fire, and lost only half-a-dozen men.

There is a rumour that Mr. Odo Russell is at Versailles, but nothing positive is known here, for although pigeons have arrived they have brought nothing but private telegrams. The spirit of the Parisians is as good as ever, and we do not seem to be any nearer the end of our provisions than when we began. At the club to-day, however, we ate *filet de cheval* for dinner. It was my first trial of the noble animal in that form, and I thought him excellent. How people continue to eat pigs I can't imagine

Nov. 27.

The task of a correspondent living in the midst of an army, with a watchful and intelligent enemy in front, is an extremely difficult one. Either he is not allowed to know or to see anything—in which case his correspondence can have very little value—or else he is treated with a confidence which in itself makes it impossible to tell the better half of what he sees and knows. There are those whose imaginative powers enable them to supply the want of actual observation, and who, sitting at home in their rooms, there draw vivid pictures of scenes and incidents which they have never witnessed, and of which at most they have more or less correct reports from stray officers picked up at a *café*. I begin to think that this is, perhaps, the best system to pursue, for it involves no trouble and no necessity of reticence, while those who are enabled to move about freely are brought by that very fact under a moral obligation to keep silence precisely on those points which would most interest their readers.

I feel the difficulty particularly to-day, for I have had confided to me nothing less than General Trochu's famous plan, and have witnessed the preparations for its execution —preparations which, although of the most formidable description, are utterly unknown and even unsuspected in Paris. The last finishing touch is now being put to them, and in twenty-four hours hence everything will be ready. The officers whom I accompanied were charged with the erection of a battery upon a spot which seemed to have been formed by nature for the purpose. It had not yet been touched, and the first step was taken under my eyes by drawing the "ligne directrice," to show the direction the guns were to have—an operation which, indeed, was performed by the help of my walking-stick, the proper instruments having been forgotten. Yet by this time to-morrow a battery of six heavy guns, four of them throwing a 72-pound shell, will be in position there, and, what is best of all, will be perfectly concealed until the moment has arrived for unmasking them, which will be done by simply throwing down a few yards of wall. This battery will be of great service in any case, and under certain contingencies may become simply invaluable. Along with the other preparations which I witnessed, it clearly indicates the scheme of offensive action which will within a few days be carried into execution. The plan is a bold, but at the same time not an unsafe one; and, if the troops can only be handled, it has every chance of success. The officers with whom I was out make certain of the result, and are in better spirits than the garrison has known for a long time. They declare that in eight days we shall be in communication with the outside. I have made my arrangements, and when the fight comes it will go hard but I am there.

The order forbidding any non-military person to enter or

to leave the city has been very strictly enforced, and at the gate by which I went out there was not only the usual guard, but also an aide-de-camp posted to decide upon special cases. These precautions will not have been taken in vain if the Prussians know as little as the Parisians what has been done and is doing at the positions I visited; for, strange to say, the secret has for once been very completely kept. The plan is assuredly a good one, but the troops with which it must be carried into execution may easily spoil it. We want a month or two of Aurelles de Paladine here. I saw more than one soldier perfectly drunk to-day. This is a new and dangerous sign, and promises badly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SORTIE OF CHAMPIGNY.

Nov. 29.

THE great effort against the Prussian lines was fixed for to-day, and you may imagine that those who were in the secret were early afoot. After eleven weeks of almost unbroken quiet and inaction, it is most intensely exciting to know that the supreme moment is at length at hand. One's heart seems to be perpetually leaping about in one's mouth, and one's whole system feels as if it were at high pressure and on the bursting point. As for me, I passed the whole of yesterday at the outposts of Issy, on the Meudon side, and when I arrived in Paris I found orders to be at the rendezvous at eight o'clock in the evening. I arrived there all ready for a start, but at twelve o'clock I was told that no move would be made till four o'clock this morning; so I ran home, threw myself on my bed, "all "standing," and snatched three hours' delightful sleep. At four o'clock I was in the saddle again, and rejoined my party. By the dim light of the lanterns we called the roll, and in half an hour we were silently wending our way towards a second rendezvous. There we awaited further orders, wrapping our cloaks around us and silently munching cigars, or exchanging our ideas as to the plan of operations. In Paris as yet nothing is known as to the plan in question, and most of those who spoke were, I found, still in utter darkness and entirely abroad in their

conjectures. Thus we waited for nearly two hours, till the struggling sun began to filter, as it were, a rosy hue over the eastern roofs, and the lamps began to wax pale. Then there came a counter order, accompanied by a whispering of "pontoons" and bridges having become a difficulty at the last moment, but at the same time a direction to hold ourselves in readiness to go out at any moment.

I passed the rest of the day at the Palais Royal, where the Intendant-General is lodged, waiting for news and instructions. I think I shall not soon forget that room, with its red panels, white wainscoting, and heavy chandelier wrapped up in a bag. There was a perpetual coming and going of *estafettes*, with and without despatches, and with the arrival of each one a fresh excitement. Everybody was nervous; to sit down was impossible, and the favourite occupation was that of walking up and down the room and lighting cigarettes, which were thrown away almost as soon as begun. Monseigneur Bauer came in with intelligence that the whole affair was postponed, which calmed people a little; but almost immediately afterwards an orderly arrived from Bicêtre, and assured us that there had already been heavy fighting, and that L'Hay, Chevilly, and Thiais had been taken, at which all the faces brightened and the excitement revived. Then a man came in with some question of buttons which he had been ordered to make, and gravely propounded a difficulty as to their delivery; but he was sent to the right-about indignantly, which, indeed, he deserved, for supposing that anybody could think of buttons at such a moment.

At length a despatch arrived from the Governor, and we were told to be ready again to-morrow morning at five o'clock. At the same time I was shown two proclamations, one by the Government and the other by General Ducrot,

both of which fall very flat now that the affair is postponed. They have, it seems, appeared this morning, the intention being that their effect should be simultaneous with the action, and they are well and ingeniously drawn, but they read now as stale beer drinks. General Ducrot says that he "swears only to re-enter Paris dead or victorious," which is very French, and not quite new, nor, for a general, quite wise; but his proclamation is stirring and appropriate—probably as good a one for its object as could be desired. That of the Government is quiet and determined, and it contains an appeal to the Parisians to preserve unity in the moment of danger; which will, it is to be hoped, be appreciated and adequately responded to.

This evening all kinds of wild rumours are afloat, and the newspapers carefully abstain from publishing anything that could possibly throw light upon them. Probably nothing of any moment has been done to-day. The great danger is that enough may have been begun to put the Prussians on their guard. The hour, however, is very near. By this time to-morrow many a brave man will have gone to his account, and Paris will have struck a great and, I trust, a successful blow to free itself from the circle that has so long pressed it. It is useless to write and to speculate at such a moment. The events will shortly speak for themselves in terrible language. This people is going forth to fight for its plundered homes, its honour, its very existence. Surely it is for Englishmen to say at such a moment, God speed them!

ST. MAUR, *near* PARIS, *Dec.* 1, 9 *p.m.*

The last three days have been filled with excitement, and it has been a matter of considerable difficulty to follow the course of events so as to be able to give you a due account of them. I have scarcely slept at all for three nights, have been afoot from sunrise till long after dark,

and yesterday I was fourteen hours in the saddle. I find myself now, however, comfortably installed with Captain de Charme in a deserted country house at St. Maur, on the banks of the Marne. There is not a stick of furniture left in the house, but an orderly has found wood enough to pass the night, and has besides discovered in the fields which were yesterday morning occupied by the Prussians a few potatoes, cabbages, and carrots, with which he has made us an excellent soup, the only repast I have been able to make to-day. It is freezing hard, but, wrapped in a cloak, with one's feet to the fire, it may still be possible to give an intelligible account of the great effort that has been made by the Army of Paris as it has appeared to an eye-witness who has had every opportunity of seeing the operations, and of knowing what was their plan and object.

To render the plan intelligible, I must remind my readers that the Marne on the eastern side of Paris makes a large loop, which it almost completes into a circle before entering the city. Outside and around this loop the Prussians have been posted throughout the siege in the villages of Champigny, Villiers-le-Desert, and Chennevières, round to Mesly. Inside the loop is the peninsula of St. Maur, which bulges out into the Prussian lines, and it is from this position that General Trochu resolved to make his effort. I wrote on Sunday evening last that I had witnessed extraordinary preparations, which I did not feel warranted in disclosing at that time. These preparations consisted in nothing less than the transformation of the peninsula of St. Maur into one vast fort, in which there are upwards of 80 pieces of cannon, commanding the whole of the surrounding country for 6000 metres. The object of the first movement was to pass the Marne under the protection of this artillery, and to establish a mass of troops in Champigny and on the adjacent heights, with a view to

ulterior operations, which will, if all goes as well as it has hitherto, be developed in due time.

Tuesday last was the day fixed upon for the first movement, and on Monday night I was warned to be in readiness by ten o'clock. At midnight, however, I was told to be ready at four o'clock in the morning, and after snatching three hours' sleep I was at the rendezvous. The streets were dark with the darkness of a winter night—not a star to be seen—and from afar came the short, sharp beat of the *rappel*, calling the National Guard to arms. The troops which were destined to take an active part in the operations, having already left Paris, were camped outside with a numerous artillery. At five o'clock we were at a second rendezvous, where we were to await the final orders. For two hours we tramped up and down in the dark to keep warm until the sun filtered a little pale light over the eastern roofs, in a last despairing and unsuccessful attempt to shine upon us. Then we received an intimation that the affair was postponed for an hour or two, but that further instructions would be sent. In order to be in case to receive them at the first moment, I went to the rooms of the Intendant-Général Wolf at the Palais Royale. There was the greatest excitement there, aides-de-camp coming and going every minute, and a continual influx of personages of every degree of distinction, among others Monseignor Bauer, who, in his broad-brimmed hat, with red silk cord and tassels, diamond star, and long boots and spurs, looked a strange compound of the military and the ecclesiastical. After waiting the better part of the day, I learnt at last that in consequence of a sudden rise in the waters of the Marne the passage of the river had been necessarily postponed, and with it the whole of the day's operations. It is a striking proof of the completeness with which, for once, the secret of the plan has been kept, that the Parisians were totally unable to under-

stand what the Marne had got to do with it. They knew that the great attempt was to be made, but they were convinced that it was to take place on the southern side, in the direction of Villejuif, while those who took a different view looked for a great effort by Fort Issy on the south-west. In the evening all kinds of rumours were abroad, but that which met with the most favour was to the effect that bridges had indeed been thrown across the Marne, but that the Prussians had opened the locks above, and had thus set free a flood which had swept away the bridges, leaving a division of the French army on the other side. There was, consequently, great discouragement; and what made the matter worse was that the morning's *Journal Officiel* had contained a couple of proclamations, one signed by the Government, and the other by General Ducrot, announcing that the hour had at length arrived, and that the great and final struggle had begun, and was then being carried on valiantly. The proclamation of the Government was moderate, dignified, and determined; but General Ducrot's was quite in the heroic style, and he announced that he "swore before the country to re-enter Paris only dead or "victorious." When, therefore, it was known that he had in reality never left the lines, and that he had probably breakfasted at the Louvre with General Trochu, his words seemed not only foolish, but very discouraging, and the spirits of the Parisians fell to the lowest possible ebb.

Accordingly, when yesterday morning, at five o'clock, I rejoined the companions with whom I had been authorised to follow the action, I found them much demoralised, and utterly unable to believe in anything less than a crushing disaster. Before we started, however, we learnt that the tale of the bridges having been swept away was a pure invention, for that they had never been made; and when at seven o'clock we received final instructions, we set out

in improved spirits towards a magnificent sunrise, which streaked the sky in great bands of yellow and crimson. Our destination was Créteil, the little village on the western side of the Marne loop which I had already twice visited. We found the Porte de Charenton encumbered with ammunition waggons, troops, ambulance vans, and National Guards, and surrounded by a crowd of citizens unattached, whom curiosity had drawn at that early hour from their beds. We passed on the road a few stragglers. One of them particularly impressed me. He was a poor little peasant, weak, and evidently consumptive. He had come out of the hospital that morning, he said; his regiment was in front, and he hoped to come up with it. He smiled faintly as he spoke; and, with his hacking cough, his pale cheeks lit with a hectic flush, his drooping, weak figure, and helpless, hopeless aspect, he seemed a living example of the cruelty of that accursed thing which is called war.

Just outside Créteil I found an enormous file of ambulance carriages, and a regiment massed under arms and ready to march. It was now nearly ten o'clock, and the action had already been begun, for the forts behind and the batteries of St. Maur on our left were throwing shot and shell which whistled through the air over our heads, and, as it seemed, all around. The narrow street was filled with troops marching to the front, chiefly regiments of the line; but there was one battalion of the National Guard already in the village—part of it, indeed, at the outposts; and as it was the 170th—a Belleville battalion—I was anxious to see how it would behave. The Prussians were still in their old positions on this side, occupying a barricade of trees 500 yards beyond the village, and the heights of Mesly still farther beyond. I committed my horse to safe custody and walked on to the farthest houses,

and there turned to the left, where I found a battery of eight guns in position on the hill, which here descends to the Marne running close below. Créteil being on a hill overlooking on the left the peninsula of St. Maur to the heights of Villiers, and in front commanding a full view of the rising ground of Montmesly, is admirably situated for a general view of the operations; but when the line of battle is extended it is impossible to follow it throughout, and I shall describe more particularly what I had immediately under my own eyes.

From the battery I saw the French skirmishers dotted thickly along the flank of the hill at a distance of 300 yards, and, a short distance beyond, the Prussians firing on them from the wood. In a minute or two the fusillade began in earnest—a rolling, rattling, crackling fire, which now and then swelled into a continuous roar. The road on the right was partially hidden by trees, but I could see the Prussian barricade indicated by an incessant curtain of white smoke, which distinguished it from the rest of the line, where the action was as yet indicated only by little detached puffs. Suddenly the smoke of the barricade cleared off and was not renewed, and the instant after I saw a swarm of men running rapidly at and disappearing behind the barricade, which was thus taken at the point of the bayonet. The skirmishers on the left nevertheless continued in their position, running only to and fro along their own line, while the Prussians kept up a vigorous fusillade, as we knew in the battery, for the balls occasionally fell around us, we being on higher ground and in the line of fire. Over the Marne I could see the red trousers swarming up the hills beyond Champigny, and the artillery alternately galloping up and firing, while the Prussian line had already—this was at eleven o'clock—disappeared over the crest. Meantime, St. Maur was keeping up an

incessant fire of heavy guns towards Villiers-sur-Marne and Cœully.

The ground rose on the right of the battery where I was posted; I could not, however, gain from it a full view of the action immediately at hand. I returned, therefore, to the main street of Créteil, and, finding a high house at the end of the village, entered it—the door, like all doors in Créteil, was open—and went up to the top story. The view thence was superb. In front, and on the right of the road, there was before me the whole slope of the hill of Montmesly rising from a valley which dips on the right or western side of the village. On the top of the hill, some 800 yards off, the Prussian skirmishers were running to and fro, and keeping up an incessant fire. A little below them were the French skirmishers, similarly engaged; and still farther down were two columns of supports, flanked by batteries of field artillery. The supports were standing at ease, their bayonets glistening in the sun, but the artillery was leisurely throwing shells over the crest of the hill, not without being answered, for, although the Prussian artillery could not be seen, there came every now and then a shell which tore up the earth and threw clouds of dust into the air. At length the Prussians disappearing, the French skirmishers advanced over the crest (this was at half-past eleven), and the supporting columns advanced in beautiful formation slowly upward, followed by the artillery. Here the action seemed to warm, and some of the French skirmishers began to fall back—in very good order, however—firing and turning slowly. Wounded men, pale and bloody, now began to arrive, some walking, some borne on brancards.

For half an hour I followed the action from my post; but then impatience got the better of me, and I took horse and rode along towards the front. As I passed what had to

that morning been the last French barricade, and came into the open, I found that the balls came thick and fast from the left. The wounded meantime came along by twos and threes, and in the fields several still lay. I wished, however, to revisit the barricade of trees where I had already met the Prussians under a flag of truce, and which had just been captured from them. I advanced, therefore, up to it; but as I was about to pass through I was met by a crowd of breathless men swarming around and through it, and running to the shelter of a wall on the right of the road. Beyond I could see others running up, and as I foresaw confusion I thought it best to return, which I did under a considerably increased accompaniment of balls. As I re-entered the village and came upon the supports, I was eagerly questioned by officers and men. "Nous "battons en retraite, n'est ce pas?" said they, feverishly; and I was forced to reply that I thought so. The Belleville battalion was there, and their remarks were not calculated to inspire confidence in their courage. "Nous "sommes battus," said they, looking with pale faces at one another, while some of them silently left the ranks, and walked with a careless air towards the rear.

Advancing again, I found that the skirmishers were huddled up rather than rallied behind their wall, while the road, which before had been perfectly deserted, was covered with stragglers making for the village in a weary, downcast way. To them from the front came a gendarme, who rode about furiously, asking them, "Are you wounded?" and on the negative reply, bidding them with oaths to return to the front. I saw that the fortune of the battle had, indeed, distinctly turned. The French were now running fast back over the crest of the hill, and the supports had retired with the artillery into the valley in a line with the village on the right. As I was looking I saw the Prussian

artillery appear on the hill, make a half turn, and send a shell instantaneously into the village, where it blew a house behind me into shatters. At this time the din of the action was something quite infernal. St. Maur on the left was firing its big guns incessantly, and the battery between Créteil and the Marne began to reply vigorously to the Prussian batteries, while the rolling of the fusillade kept up an undercurrent which completed the deadly concert.

It was now half-past twelve. I returned to the Place in the centre of the village opposite to the church. Such a scene as there grew up before me in a moment or two I hope I shall never behold again. The pavement was covered with wounded men, generally half undressed, and lying there helplessly, while one surgeon was doing his best to attend to them. In the middle of the Place a seething mob of soldiers of all arms struggled and wrestled to get through the village, without order, without leaders, without an idea what to do or whither to go, unless it were to avoid the Prussians. Every moment the mob increased, with every moment the panic became greater and the struggle to get through fiercer. They fought with each other, they swayed to and fro, a moving mass of men and gleaming arms, they pressed out on either side till they filled the little Place, and trampled even on their wounded comrades, whom the first comers had avoided. It was not an army that was retreating, it was not even a respectable mob. But this attack was but a diversion, and the main result of the engagement was entirely successful. On the chief ground of conflict the French captured Champigny and some of the hills beyond it, but Villiers-le-Désert, which lies a little farther out, proved to be too strongly fortified to be taken. They remained, however, outside the Marne loop encamped on

the battle-field in and about Champigny, having not indeed pierced, but bulged into the Prussian lines to a very considerable extent, while on the Créteil side they retained their positions. Their loss is said to have been on the whole day as much as 3000 men; that of the Prussians was probably less.

This morning the renewal of the action was not only expected, but officially announced, and as it was certain to take place exclusively on the Champigny side, I resolved to establish myself in the redoubt of St. Maur, from which the whole position is most easily to be seen. I arrived here accordingly early, quite unencumbered with any baggage, and obtained the offer of my present quarters, as well as the information that it was *not* proposed to renew the action to-day, possibly not to-morrow. Upon this I started for yesterday's battle-field, crossing the river at Joinville-le-Pont by one of the bridges of boats, of which there are six. A couple of hundred yards of road brought me to the first houses of Champigny, a long, straggling village, very much knocked to pieces. Some of the houses had the whole of their front and roof carried away by the fire, and others had great holes in the roof, and all were marked with the white splotch of the bullet. Just outside the village a greensward covered with fragments of red and blue cloth, bloody linen, and lint half trampled into the grass, showed where the wounded had been laid. The street was full of French soldiers, every one of whom seemed to be laden with straw, of which the Prussians left a large quantity in the place, as well as a great store of vegetables, both of which have proved very acceptable. The houses were covered with German inscriptions chalked on the doors and shutters, and the street encumbered with barricades which the French have hastily constructed of tables, chairs, barrels, and earth. The road is paved, and

the stones were still covered with blood, while dead and wounded came by me at every step.

At the end of the village I came upon the advanced posts, who were exchanging shots from behind a barricade with the Prussians, posted some hundred yards above in a house on the road; then coming back, and turning to my right, I came upon the encampment of the soldiers, who were cooking their soup on the slope of the hill, and then upon the fields where the battle had most fiercely raged. They were trampled by the feet of thousands of armed men into one rough mass of rugged earth, patched here and there with vines, from which the grapes still hung rotting on their stems. The railway traverses the hill here, and there is a level crossing, the lodge of which was surrounded by artillery, horsed and ready to march. Farther on was a large but half-demolished stone building, called the "Lime Kiln," which here marks the extreme limit of the French lines. All about it lay dead bodies of men, and a still more ghastly sight perhaps—the red skeletons of four horses from which the flesh had been cut to be eaten. Beyond this the ground was ploughed by the shells into great channels, which lay in many places scarcely a yard apart. Then more dead bodies, some of them being buried, more skeletons of horses, many of them horribly mangled by shell, and in one spot a large space covered with arms, accoutrements, biscuit, and knapsacks, over which there sat a ransacking party of the line. Close by, a line of elms on the top of the hill marked the French advanced posts, and here a series of earthworks were being erected. I returned down the hill outside Champigny, by the cemetery, the wall of which is broken into breaches in twenty places, while many of the tombstones have been broken off by the cannon.

Dec. 2.

I was awoke this morning a little before seven o'clock by the rattle of a fusillade, which seemed to be quite near, and in a few minutes I had shaken myself into a state of wakefulness and ran to the redoubt of St. Maur, over a road which was slippery with ice, and at the same time white with hoar frost. As I neared the entrance to the redoubt it began to fire from its heavy guns with an explosion which shook the ground. I ran to the side which overlooks the Marne. The river runs almost immediately below the redoubt, which stands on a hill overlooking it on the other side. A flat plain extends to Champigny, a mile off, above which rises the spire round which are clustered the houses of Villiers-le-Désert. From these two villages the flank of the hill runs away to the left, dotted by isolated houses, amongst which the Lime Kiln and the railway lodge are recognisable. Beyond Champigny the ground slopes into a valley, hidden from us for a little space, but rising beyond into further heights, the crest of which, three miles off, stands out against the sky, broken by a few tall trees and by a single white house with a red roof. In the little valley and on the further height is a wood, from which the road to Champigny rises, and runs along the hillside under the white house. I beg attention to this little sketch of the ground, as it is necessary to render intelligible the desperate conflict which has passed under my eyes.

When I arrived at the redoubt it was seven o'clock. The sun was showing his first ruddy flush over the hills, but the night was still on the scene, and under the Lime Kiln the camp fires of the French blazed brightly out in the twilight, while beyond the frequent flash and following roar showed where the Prussians had established their batteries, and the use they were making of them. A fierce fusillade was going on in Champigny and the woods be-

yond, but we watched it hopelessly, for below was a sight even more pitiful than that which I beheld the day before yesterday at Créteil. The whole plain was covered with a scattered mass of men running for the bridge on our left like so many ants, while on the road a crowd of horsemen were madly careering in the same direction. I should think there must have been a rabble of four or five thousand men there, and it was something too terrible to see them flying for their lives, panic-stricken and desperate. It was a perfect rout. General Favé, who commands in this peninsula, ordered nearly the whole of the artillery which had been established around it to fall back to the redoubt in order to protect the retreat. "C'est fini; ils "nous ont surpris et nous avons été joliment ramenés," was the remark bitterly uttered, and generally followed by a wish that it were allowable to sweep the plain of the poltroons who were flying. "But they will not be allowed "to pass the bridge, and then we shall see." Another consolation, and the cannon was immediately set to work.

There can be no doubt whatever that the redoubt of St. Maur saved the French army to-day. It commands all the plains and the height beyond, and possesses heavy guns, throwing 72-lb. and 40-lb. shells, while outside were crowded together sixty others, which in the moment of panic General Favé ordered up from the lower portion of the peninsula in order to protect the retreat. It was indeed considered at that moment that all was over. The Prussians were in Villiers, on the heights, down in the woods, and in the first houses of Champigny; while on the left we could see the French falling back along the farther part of the Marne. The telegraph officials were established in a little wooden hut outside the redoubt, and they packed up their papers and instruments and prepared for a start. Consternation was depicted on every face. The Prussians

had brought five or six batteries of artillery, which from the top of the hill on the left of the white house were pouring a perfect hail of shells upon Champigny and the last troops that stood firm, a little wavering line of fusillade answering feebly as it fell back on its receding supports. The whole line, in fact, was in full retreat. Champigny was half taken by the Prussians.

Then was seen the enormous power that in the hour of danger a single man of intelligence and courage can exercise. De Charme had made the redoubt of St. Maur, and knew its importance. Calmly walking about and smoking innumerable cigars, he brought his guns to bear upon the Prussian batteries, and in half an hour (at eight o'clock) had silenced them. Soon after some change was observable in the plain. Gendarmes began to gallop to and fro and belabour the fugitives with the flat of their sabres. The bridges were barred, and the mob of soldiers crowded up against the river, and began to halt and to rally under the houses of Champigny. The shells meantime were falling among them, and I could see several concealed behind banks of earth and walls, whence the gendarmes drove them out from time to time. Two batteries of artillery now trotted into the plain, wheeled into position, and opened fire, while a third established itself by the railway lodge, and a fourth close to the Lime Kiln, round which the abandoned tents were still standing, and the fires slowly dying out. Our redoubt was firing rapidly. Several shells exploded as they left the piece, and a fragment of one of them went right through the telegraph hut, just missing the operator. The mitrailleuses (the *moulins à café*, as the soldiers call them) were firing heavily on the left, and it was one continued din, rattle, and hissing of shells. It was now nine o'clock, and the Prussian batteries by the white house opened again upon

our redoubt as though to silence it. The shells began to hiss about with that increasing loudness which shows that they are approaching the hearer. The distance was over two miles, but the Prussian gunners aimed well, and all their shells fell in the redoubt or quite close to it. One of them carried away the side of an embrasure close to me, and exploded, half-stifled, in the earth, but did no damage. About a hundred shells fell during the next hour and a half, but only three men were wounded.

At ten o'clock the French line had ceased its sustained backward movement, and was wavering to and fro, while the troops in the plain, rallied and re-formed, began to move to the front again in order, to the inspiriting sound of the charge, and in a quarter of an hour the first line was again seen running up the hill by the Lime Kiln and over by the railway lodge, which was on fire and blazing, while the left was coming back over the crest of the hill. At eleven o'clock the redoubt had again silenced the Prussian batteries, which retired to the right of the white house, under shelter of the rising ground and a thick fringe of elms. The fusillade continued in one unbroken rattle, with varying intensity as it advanced and retired. At twelve o'clock the left recovered itself, and from that time to the end of the day it remained almost motionless on the hill reaching by the Marne, Brie-sur-Marne, and facing Villiers-le-Désert. In half an hour the Prussians were running out of Champigny up the hill by the white house, but it was only to be relieved by fresh skirmishers, who came down to the wood in a cloud, their helmets gleaming in the sun, followed by two heavy columns of supports marching in great black squares. Meantime the battle still continued, and a shell or two still fell from time to time on the plain; but the tide had now turned; the French still pressed slowly forward, and the Prussians, beaten off in

their attack, retreated to their first positions, while their artillery moved off to the right along the wood to Chennevières.

At three o'clock the battle was over, nothing more to be heard of the terrible din but an occasional dropping fusillade and a few big guns from Nogent. As soon as the fire relaxed I went down to Joinville-le-Pont, crossed by one of the bridges of boats, and, finding there a *fiacre*, went to the entrance of Champigny over the plain. Champigny was encumbered with troops, and the ambulance vans were coming up. Proceeding on foot, I found a fierce fusillade going on at the end of the village, precisely at the same place as yesterday, and thence I again turned to the left below the Lime Kiln. I found here a large number of wounded being carried away under fire, but still not so many as I should have expected, considering the fierceness of the action. Everything was now quiet, and the troops were lighting their fires, cooking their soup, and chattering gaily. The Prussians had tried a surprise, which at first succeeded, but they had now been driven back again foot by foot, till on the right they are brought again into their old positions at Champigny and at Villiers, while on the left they are on the wrong side of Brie-sur-Marne, occupied by the French. At daybreak to-morrow the action will be renewed, and it is expected that the left may be able to turn Villiers-le-Désert.

TELEGRAPH HUT, REDOUBT OF ST. MAUR, *Dec.* 3, 9 *a.m.*

At six o'clock this morning the cannonade began again, and the battery over our house (a most charming habitation it must have been in better times) shook us out of our sleep very effectually. The day is perhaps not quite so cold as yesterday, but there is a fog over all the country which makes it impossible to distinguish anything at more than half a mile off. The respective positions of the two armies

are the same. The French, some 80,000 strong, are on a curved line from Champigny, behind Villiers, and at Brie-sur-Marne, with 10,000 or 12,000 men protecting their left flank on the plateau of Avron, the other side the river, and 10,000 more massed on their right, with perhaps 100 pieces of artillery in this little peninsula, while farther to the right Créteil and Montmesly are still the respective limits of the two armies. The redoubt has fired but little this morning, and, after the first twenty or thirty rounds, has been quite silent. Nor does there appear to be anything going on over in Champigny beyond the usual outpost firing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RETREAT.

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ST. MAUR, *Dec.* 3, 12 *Noon.*

A DESPATCH has just arrived from General Ducrot, in which he announces that he is about to effect a movement of retreat, the explanation of which probably is that the Prussians have brought up on his left masses of troops with which he does not feel able to cope. It appears that this redoubt inflicted even more damage on the enemy than we thought, for beyond the hill over the white house they had a park of artillery, among which many shells fell, as well as the battery which was engaged with that which the French had brought up before Villiers. Brie-sur-Marne was lost altogether at one time, and was only retaken by a desperate assault, in which General Ducrot himself was at the head of the troops. The day is very quiet at present, and probably there will be no serious engagement. I shall, therefore, go into Paris to send off this letter, and probably return here to-night or to-morrow morning at daybreak.

2 p.m.

A movement is taking place from our right to our left.

PARIS, *Dec.* 4.

The retreat of the army across the Marne, which was ordered at twelve o'clock yesterday, was effected in the most tranquil manner, and without firing a shot. The regiments defiled one after the other over the plain of

Champigny as quickly as possible, and the Prussians did not attempt to interfere, being probably only too glad to have their old lines left to them, which after all, however, is not the case, for outposts are still left in Champigny itself. They could not in reality help looking on at the retreat, for St. Maur on the one side, and the batteries of the Plateau d'Avron on the other, would have crushed any advance made with a view to harass it. By dark the whole army was back again over the Marne, and at night it was encamped at Vincennes, to the enormous astonishment of the Parisians, who cannot at all understand how the glorious victory in which they had believed could be followed by a full retreat. The loss of the French in the two days' battle is said to be not less than 10,000, all told; that of the Prussians it is not safe even to guess at, for they carry off their dead and wounded with extraordinary promptitude. It must, however, have been very great. There are 800 prisoners in Paris, which is probably as many as have been taken during the whole of the preceding part of the war—fine, able-bodied fellows all of them, with a haughty bearing. The officers are at large on parole, and I have been invited to breakfast with four of them, at a café on the boulevard. They are lodged at the Palais de l'Elysées, are well cared for, and have even been furnished with servants, so that they have not on the whole made a bad exchange.

I must revert for a moment to the fight at Villiers on the 30th and the 2nd. The French undoubtedly fought with great bravery, and it was all the more remarkable that, after the panic on the morning of the 2nd, they should have been, as they were under my eyes, brought back, and that they should have resisted and finally repulsed the Prussian attack. On the extreme left, which was hidden from me, but where there was also a rout at first, they

appear to have fought still better. Here they *saw* the enemy, and I have it from an English gentleman of high position who was there that they made repeated bayonet charges with the greatest gallantry, driving off the Prussians with such impetuosity that the latter—quick as they are with their ambulance service—left the ground thickly strewn with dead and wounded. They advanced to within a hundred yards of Villiers, which the Prussians had, however, made into one great fortification, and which proved too strong to be taken. I think I can be certain of this, for I had my eye on the village the whole day, and it is not two miles off the spot where I was; moreover, all the French authorities admit that it never was taken. Nevertheless, an Austrian and two English gentlemen declare that they saw it taken, and an American assures me that he entered the village himself. I really don't know how history is to be written after this; but I can only attribute the idea that Villiers was ever taken to a confusion of localities. It, and it alone, was, indeed, the great obstacle which stopped the advance on the 30th, and the French were preparing to invest it when they were surprised on the 2nd, and made to accept a battle which has resulted in a retreat—orderly and unopposed it is true, but still a retreat.

The Parisian tacticians have begun, notwithstanding all the military reports and proclamations, to find fault with the operations. Ten thousand men have, they say, been thrown away for absolutely nothing, since the army has returned within its former lines; and Trochu's plan, if this indeed be it, is not only a failure, but a very bad plan into the bargain. Meantime, the more reasonable and patient remark that the *morale* of the army has been greatly raised, that the retreat, being in nowise forced, was evidently a movement made with some ulterior object other

than that of escaping from the Prussians, and that we must wait for the end before passing a verdict of condemnation. One good and novel sign is that I hear this time nothing of "treachery"; on the contrary, the greatest enthusiasm exists for the generals in command, even among those who doubt their ability. General Ducrot especially is quite the idol of the moment. His charge into Brie at the head of a regiment is very characteristic of him, and shows that French commanders still rely greatly upon their undoubted personal valour. Whether it was a wise act for a general thus to expose himself is matter of opinion, but it may have been absolutely necessary. General de la Charnière thus lost his life at Montmesly on Wednesday, and thus, too, the Commandant Franchetti, who has raised and commands an excellent corps of light cavalry, which bears his name, received on Friday a wound which it is feared may prove mortal. I have been out again in St. Maur to-day, and I find everything quiet, scarcely a a shot now and then being exchanged between the outposts. The day is bitterly cold, but waggon-loads of blankets have been served out to the troops, who present a strange aspect wrapped in the white and fleecy covering.

Dec. 5.

The accusation so often made against the Prussians of firing on the ambulances has now again been repeated in a declaration drawn up by Monseigneur Bauer, and signed, among other persons, by Mr. Austin, the *Times* correspondent. It appeared that Monseigneur Bauer went out during the battle "on horseback," with a trumpeter, to bring in the wounded, and that the Prussians fired upon him and his party. Monseigneur Bauer is undoubtedly a distinguished and devoted ecclesiastic, and he looks very well on his steed, covered all over as it and he are with

Geneva crosses, not to mention his diamond star and spurs; but during a combat I imagine that the only proper person to apply to for a suspension of arms is a military officer of one of the two armies. I imagine that the mere exhibition of the Geneva flag, even with a trumpeter attached to it, does not oblige the combatants to cease their hostilities—that, in fact, Monseigneur Bauer, in his zeal, probably himself overstepped his functions. That does not excuse the Prussians, however, for firing upon him; for apart from the sacred Geneva flag, they ran the risk of depriving Paris of one of its most successful preachers, and the ladies of one of their greatest pets. But I am convinced there must have been some misunderstanding or irregularity, for I find all those who have had to do with the Prussians in matters concerning the wounded are unanimous in testimony as to their extremely good behaviour, and I can support that testimony from my own knowledge. There are a large number of persons, however, who seem to live upon the satisfaction they derive from believing that the Prussians are the most cowardly and barbarous of mankind, and who are capable of denouncing as a spy anybody who ventures to say that they do not habitually fire upon the wounded and the ambulances. This is not a figure of speech, but a fact, as I am able to testify from personal experience.

General Trochu publishes an order of the day in which he says, "The enemy, stricken in his power and his pride "has allowed a river to be passed in his presence by an "army which he had attacked the day before with so "much violence. It is impossible to insist too much on "this fact, unique in the war of 1870; for it consecrates "the efforts made by an army which two months ago did "not exist." Always the old military method, you see, of putting things. Ducrot's order of the day is less lawyer-

like, and, therefore, better. "After two days of glorious "combat," he says, "I have made you repass the Marne, "because I was convinced that new efforts in a direction "where the enemy had had time to concentrate all his "forces, and to prepare his means of action, would be "sterile." But the Parisians greatly prefer the former to the latter order. They like to be "blasés d'illu- "sions," and nothing is too absurd for them to believe. When the illusion is over, and the inexorable moment of truth arises, they come down with a run which is at once ridiculous and pitiable.

Dec. 6.

I have just heard that General Moltke has sent in a letter to the Government informing them that the Army of the Loire has been beaten after three days' fighting, and that Orleans has been once more retaken. I understand that the Government believes the news, and will publish it to-morrow. It will certainly produce the most profound discouragement and depression, for half the hopes of Paris have been placed on the Army of the Loire. It was to get to it, and so to help them to get to us, that the battle of Villiers was fought, and it was only last night that they were confidently reported to be at Montchéry, or even, as some said, at Versailles. If M. de Moltke, however, thinks that the news will bring the Parisian army any nearer to surrender, I am convinced he will find himself mistaken. The Parisian spirit is so elastic that it recovers itself quickly from the utmost pressure, and as for the siege, they have gone too long and too far now to care much for its horrors.

The material and actual influence of the defeat of the Loire Army upon the situation is, of course, another question, and which cannot be judged until we know the exact extent of the disaster. It may be so crushing as to be the

end of all hope to come from the Loire, or it may be simply a redeemable reverse, like Von der Tann's. Anyhow, it will not bring about the surrender of Paris, of that I am convinced. Probably it will be declared a pure Prussian invention in the first instance.

Provisions are still abundant, and I really do not see when we are likely to come to the end of them, for private stores are turning up in a most extraordinary way, and the further we go the better we seem to fare. I must confess here that I have given up horse and donkey. They are *not* pleasant to eat, that is a fact, and I prefer to live on bread and vegetables when meat of the ordinary kind is not forthcoming.

CHAPTER XXV.

INSIDE.

Dec. 8.

SURELY there is something surprising in the obstinate resistance which Paris has opposed to the invader. A city of facile pleasures, which seem to have been created for, as it was exclusively devoted to, the flattery of the senses; the home of cunning cooks, rare wines, elegant women, and the latest fashions; it has hitherto delighted in its own demoralisation, and has prided itself upon being the centre of all that is trivial, amusing, passing, and unimportant. Such a city and such a people, said those who did not know either except from guide-books and holiday journeys, could never resist an enemy, let alone such a formidable enemy as the Prussians. Well, here we have been for now nearly three months invested. We are on short rations; we eat horse and cat, and are rapidly coming to rat and dog; industry is stopped, trade extinct, suffering universal in one form or another. We have gone out to fight again and again, and been driven back with frightful slaughter; every day brings some bad news; and yet not only does Paris still resist, but—what is, I suppose, unique in the history of sieges—there is not a single voice anywhere raised, in public or in private, for surrender. On the contrary, every day of suffering, every new piece of discouraging news, only seems to bring a stronger determination to fight to the very last.

It will be said, perhaps, that the worst horrors of the siege have not yet been felt, since the Prussians have not bombarded Paris. If they have not done so it is not from feelings of humanity, or from any other sentiment of that nature—that it would be childish to suppose—but either because they cannot bombard, or because they are of opinion that it would not serve their purpose. Nor would it. The threat of bombardment sounds dreadful, but the reality is much less terrible than is supposed. Paris is too large to be effectually bombarded. A few hundred houses may be hit and some of them set on fire, and a few people may be killed, but that is all. It is physically impossible to cover the city with that shower of shot and shell which produces the terror that leads to surrender. That, if indeed they are ready, is why the Prussians have been so quiet, and not because they have any tenderness or sentiment about the matter. They know that as long the bombardment is a threat it seems awful, but that when it is carried into effect it is soon discovered to be not nearly so awful as was supposed, and the result of it in Paris would be not to frighten the people and the garrison, but to enrage them.

The news of the defeat of the Army of the Loire and the recapture of Orleans by the Prussians is much discussed, and, although General Moltke has abstained from giving any details, it is generally believed that the disaster must have been a great one, while no doubt at all is thrown or attempted to be thrown upon the statement that there has been a disaster, notwithstanding its purely Prussian source, and the manifest intention of General Moltke to make it an arm against Paris. It produced, undoubtedly, at first a feeling of discouragement, but, that passed, its effect has ceased, and the idea that it can be a reason for thinking of surrender does not appear to have so much as occurred to

anybody. As to the question whether the French ought to confess themselves conquered, and to submit to such terms and such dismemberment as Prussia pleases to impose, I imagine that is a question which the French themselves can alone decide. I observe that that eccentric dealer in literary *bric à brac*, Mr. Carlyle, has been delivering himself upon the subject, but I presume nobody will suppose that the mere fact of his having translated from the German and made a gallanty-show of the French Revolution entitles Mr. Carlyle to be accepted as an international authority.

Commandant Franchetti's funeral took place yesterday. He was the very *beau idéal* of a cavalry leader—young, handsome, rich, a splendid rider, brave of course, and adored by his Eclaireurs, who, by the way, were all men of family and position. One of them tells me this anecdote of him:—On the 2nd, the day on which he was mortally wounded, his squadron being in a very dangerous position and under heavy fire, was ordered to retreat. He begged that they might at least make a dash at the Prussians, but the order was reiterated, and he gave the word to retire—"Au pas." The aide-de-camp, however, as he passed the head of the squadron, told one of the officers to trot, which accordingly was done, till the trot degenerated into a gallop. Franchetti was furious. He put spurs to his horse, reached the head of his men, and shouted, "Escadron halte," in a voice of thunder. They obeyed, while the Prussian shells continued to fall about them. Then, drawing his watch from his pocket, he looked carefully at the hour, leisurely wound it up, and returned it. Then he took out a cigarette paper, delicately rolled up a cigarette, and asked for a match. One was produced, upon which he lit his cigarette, rolled it in his mouth, looked at his watch again, and said, "Escadron en "avant au pas—marche!" and thus the little troop walked

off the field under a terrible fire before the whole army. Subsequently in the day he received from the shell which has killed him a terrible wound in the upper part of the thigh, but he still remained on horseback till he fell from exhaustion. He was unconscious for some time before his death; but at the last moment he started up as from a trance, and gave a few words of command in French and in Arabic with his full voice, and then sank back to speak no more.

The ludicrous sometimes touches the tragic very nearly. The following scene is related to me by an eye-witness. A captain of the line, dangerously wounded on the 2nd, was undergoing an operation under chloroform, when in the midst of it he began to shout to his troops to charge, accompanying it by words of encouragement. Then he broke into the strains of the "Marseillaise." Suddenly, however, he stopped. "C'est de la blague ça," said he, "moi "je suis legitimiste, seulement il ne faut pas le dire parce "que ça nuirait à mon avancement." The cruel knife was going all this time, but at so unexpected an avowal there was an explosion of laughter, in which Nélaton himself, who was operating, was constrained to join.

A long report of the battles of Villiers appears in to-day's *Journal Officiel*. The account is a fair one, and in in that respect contrasts favourably with the despatches written in the heat of the battle. The losses on the whole operations all round Paris are given as—Officers killed, 72; wounded, 342; soldiers killed, 936; wounded, 4680: total killed, 1008; total wounded, 5022 (of whom some very slightly); total killed and wounded, 6030. There is also an order complaining that some Prussian officers, prisoners at large on parole in Paris, have been insulted in a *café*, and announcing that, in order to prevent a repetition of the occurrence, the officers have been interned in the prison of La Roquette. It seems a hard measure, but it is a

necessary one, for the mere sight of a Prussian seems to be calculated to drive a Parisian mad. The feeling is perhaps comprehensible, but certainly not excusable. It is, however, a novel thing in France that prisoners should be insulted, and assuredly not a creditable one.

Flourens, who in spite of the warrant out against him, has not only been at large, but has even managed to get out of the gates and to take refuge with the Tirailleurs de Belleville, has now been arrested, and will be tried under a whole category of accusations. Yesterday, too, the *Patrie en Danger*, Blanqui's organ, announced that it must stop for want of funds, and thus we have got rid of two nests of agitators at once. The point of the death of the *Patrie en Danger* is the proof it furnishes that the paper had not enough readers to make it pay.

There is a rumour this evening that "a French army" is at Corbeil, and it is suggested that this must be a portion, as yet unbeaten, of the Army of the Loire. The *Combat*, indeed, announces that this same army has completed its junction with that of Bourbaki, and that both are "a few kilometres" from Fontainebleau. The weather is becoming very severe. A deal of snow fell last night and this morning, and as it is half inclined to melt in places it makes the streets very unpleasant.

Dec. 10.

At the commencement of the siege the Government stated that Paris contained food enough to last two months, and yet now at the end of nearly three months we do not seem to be coming near to the end of our provisions. Some articles of food, indeed, which were thought to have been long since exhausted have reappeared within the last few days. Thus cheese and rice, to which we all supposed that we had bidden a long farewell, have been produced by the Government from out of its stores in large quantities, and

are now being sold freely upon the production of the ration card. Beef is getting somewhat more scarce, and the rations are alternated with horse-meat and herrings, the ration of the latter being the sixth of a herring per day. Vegetables, bread, wine, and tobacco are absolutely as plentiful as in times of peace. Vegetables alone are a little dearer. I speak here of what may be called the public provisions; but there are private stores of enormous extent, and I find that as yet these stores have scarcely been touched. I myself have not made and do not intend to make any provision of food; but I know of several cows, sheep, and pigs, and of many chickens and rabbits, among my private friends, more than one of whom has offered to share with me in the last resort. Meantime there are those who help themselves. It is amusing, and at the same time significant, to observe the enormous number of notices offering rewards for "lost" dogs and cats, the greater part of which have, no doubt, been long since eaten and digested. If the rats had any masters there would be rewards going for them too, for they have been made a regular dish in many restaurants. They are said to be good *en ragoût*, but I shall certainly not try them till everything else fails.

The ambulances of Paris ought to be as good as anything of the kind that the world can produce, but such is, I am sorry to say, far, far from being the case. The Internationale is especially badly managed, and there has been a waste of money beyond all computation over its arrangements. It claims to be the chief, and sometimes, indeed, the only regular, institution of its kind; its means are abundant, and its advantages only measured by its demands; and yet it is positively a disgrace to the capital. Installed now in the Grand Hôtel, whence it has removed from the Palais de l'Industrie, it has filled the upper floors

with 500 wounded, packed three, four, and five in each of the little rooms which the company was wont to let to single travellers at high prices. Ventilation cannot be said to be imperfect, for there is none; and the dead, as many as fifty at a time, are placed, "packed like biscuits," in the centre of a gallery into which the rooms open. The stench is something too terrible, and only last night a French gentleman said to me, "To be taken there is death." By the side of this rich but mismanaged society the foreign ambulances, small and poor, offer a striking contrast, the American, the Italian, and that which is established at the Corps Législatif (I think the Austrian) being models in their way, more especially the American, where Dr. Swinburne undertakes single-handed the care of nearly 200 men, and that with such success that he scarcely ever loses one of them.

There are a few English in the American ambulance, among others Mr. Lewis Wingfield, who is well known in London, and who, having studied surgery, has come out in quite a new character as assistant-surgeon, in which he has been of the greatest service. His work is of the hardest; in the morning he goes off at six o'clock, only to return late at night from a day full of operating and bandaging, and every two or three nights he sits up during the whole twenty-four hours. For upwards of two months he has done this, and it seems to me that so much constancy and courage ought not to go unrecorded. Probably a little surgical knowledge is the most valuable of all acquirements for those who are ever likely to leave their own firesides. I would have given a great deal to have possessed it on the 30th at Créteil. As it was, I attempted to set a poor fellow's arm with improvised splints of straw, and I shall not forget the relief with which I handed my patient over to a regular surgeon, nor the respect I conceived for him, as

for one able to alleviate the poor creature's sufferings. All honour to these patient, silent workers, and above all to those who devote themselves without fee, reward, or even the prospect of honour of any kind.

The weather continues to be of the most severe winter kind. The streets are covered with snow, and the thermometer is at 10 deg. Centigrade below freezing. The winter, however, is early in Paris, and another month will see us through the worst of it. Probably the Prussians are suffering considerably outside, but the weather is almost equally damaging to the garrison, since it renders military operations almost impossible. An army leaving Paris would be unable to throw up any kind of earthworks, and would be compelled to take with it many more stores than would be necessary in milder times.

Dec. 14.

I don't know how it strikes Englishmen in England, or whether it has yet struck them at all; but to Englishmen in Paris it seems the most extraordinary and monstrous thing that we alone of all the nationalities here present should be utterly without any official person whatever to look after us and our interests in case of need. I speak advisedly when I say that of all European nations (and I may even include most of the Asiatic and South American), England is the only one whose representatives have packed up bag and baggage and gone off to a man, without making any provision for their fellow-subjects. Several countries have left their minister. Those that have not done that have left a consul, a secretary of legation, or an attaché; and Portugal, which is the only Power whose representatives have gone away altogether, has handed her subjects over to the protection of the United States. English diplomacy alone has reserved for itself the shameful distinction of having entirely deserted its post,

at a time when of all others it might have been of any use, without giving a thought or taking a step in behalf of those whom it has left behind. Ambassadors, secretaries, attachés, even the consul—all have fled, and left as the sole representative of Great Britain—the porter of the Embassy. As though to make the thing more ridiculous and the desertion more flagrant, Mr. Blount, an old and much-respected inhabitant of Paris, but a purely private individual, has, I understand, been asked to look after the interests and lives of his fellow subjects. It is extremely public-spirited in him, but when we have a regular paid official body of men to perform a certain duty, it seems incredible that they should all be taken away at such a moment, and be allowed to hand over their duties to a private gentleman, who can claim neither pay nor honour for his services, and who, having no official position, cannot possibly perform those duties adequately. This is a very important matter, for at the present moment there are more English in Paris than there are subjects of any other nation. No less than nine hundred of them are in so destitute a condition that they are reduced to living upon the food which the Charitable Society doles out to them daily; and here again, too, we luckily have found a private gentleman ready to come forward with help in the person of Mr. Richard Wallace, whose purse has been opened from the beginning of the siege in a way which entitles him to the deep gratitude of his countrymen. I repeat that the English Embassy and Consul have deserted us at a time when their presence was most necessary, and I should like to know why we alone of all nationalities should be deprived entirely of official representatives, and why it should be left to private gentlemen to assume the protection of English interests. I am convinced that the fault does not lie with the gentlemen who

composed the Embassy; they would, I am certain, have stayed here readily, if not with pleasure. The Foreign Office, however, sent positive orders, and it would be interesting to know upon what kind of ground those orders were founded. The question for us here is a very practical one, for with excited National Guards, a suspicious Government and people, and a thousand questions of taxes and personal liabilities, the British subject is continually requiring to be heard by the Provisional Government, and there is nobody to represent them, and consequently no mode of redress possible for even the most flagrant injustice. I could cite cases in point, but the matter requires no illustration, and it is to be presumed that when Parliament meets a strict explanation will be required. Meantime, here are some three thousand British subjects abandoned entirely at a time when they have the most urgent need of the protection of their country, whose majesty and power are represented by an empty palace and a large French porter!

The weather here has entirely changed. On Thursday evening a thaw set in, and there is now a light and balmy south-westerly breeze blowing, which feels very grateful after the cold, but which has filled the streets with mud and made the country around one vast quagmire. Another sortie is expected to take place immediately, but I confess I look forward without any hope to its result. Upon the last occasion I thought the chance good, and I know that at any rate the retreat was a splendid one. Had it not been so the consequences of the 2nd would indeed have been most disastrous. Moreover, it was known that the Army of the Loire would make an effort to reach a hand to any army that made good its way out of Paris, and it was believed to be in a condition to do so effectually.

Now, however, the face of matters have greatly changed for the worse. Whatever may be the exact nature of the defeat communicated to us by M. de Moltke, it is not to be doubted that the Army of the Loire is at present not in a condition to come to the succour of Paris, even half-way; while the new plan that is, I understand, to be followed in the next sortie is, in my humble opinion, far less likely to succeed than that which failed—honourably, indeed, but which still failed—on the 2nd. Paris is still impregnable, it is true, and may, after any number of defeated sorties, exist and maintain its attitude of passive resistance; but when once the certainty is acquired that no help can come from the provinces, it will be dangerous to prolong the defence.

The Parisians, however, have nothing to lose, and therefore nothing to fear. The period of ruin is over; industry and commerce are extinguished, and the richest and most selfish have now learnt to be content with a bare existence on half rations of horse. There is no Government, and never will be any, ready to dismember the country; and if the Prussians remain here a year, they will have in the end to do what they might do now—return as far as Alsace and Lorraine, and hold them with a strong hand till France is sufficiently recovered to fight for them again. They have overreached themselves, and now they have to do with a desperate people, whom they will only make more desperate the longer they continue the war.

As for Paris, it is but a town after all, and its capture or release but an incident in the struggle. It is the merest nonsense to pretend, as M. de Bismarck does, that it is the Provisional Government which is the cause of French resistance. It is the French people themselves, who will not submit to see their country dismembered, who will

fight to the end against it, and if it happens will but take time to bind up their wounds in order to begin again. I venture to say that at this moment M. de Bismarck would not find a man in France ready to sign a Treaty of Peace ceding the two provinces. It may suit his purpose to throw the responsibility of resistance to his projects on the Provisional Government; but he knows, and all Europe knows, that in this matter at least the Government has but represented the determination of the people.

FORT VANVES, *near* PARIS, *Dec.* 16.

It was known yesterday evening that several pigeons had arrived during the day, and there was naturally the greatest impatience to know what news they had brought. This morning the news is published, and very bad it looks. Rouen occupied by the Prussians on the 5th, Orleans reoccupied by them on the same day, the Army of the Loire driven back to Beaugency and Nevers with a loss of 10,000 men, and the Government forced to take refuge at Bordeaux. Such is the evil side of the account. On the other hand, it appears that the defeat which M. de Moltke communicated to us was but a bare defeat and no more, for we learn that the Army of the Loire is still nearly intact, 200,000 strong and possessing 500 cannon. It seems, too, that Garibaldi is, contrary to all expectation, really doing good service in the Vosges, and that the Prussian communications are continually interrupted and their armies harassed all along the eastern line, not only by the Franc-tireurs and the Garibaldini, but also by the peasantry, who are beginning to resent the ruin of their homes and the organised robbery to which they have been subjected.

As far as Paris is concerned, however, the news is altogether bad, for the one great fact that is clear is that

the Prussians are steadily advancing both in the west and in the south, and that the armies of succour are being driven farther off. That, I take it, is the only result which it is important for the Prussians to arrive at for the present. It is not necessary for them to advance beyond, for if they can only keep the armies of succour where they now are, Paris must fall sooner or later, and then the investing force will be set free to take the field with overwhelming reinforcements against all that then remains in France capable of resistance.

I left Paris at seven o'clock this morning before the *Journal Officiel* was published, and I do not therefore know how the Government has declared itself upon the receipt of this news, nor how the Parisians will have received it. I have no doubt, however, that it will produce the same effect upon them that all the other bad news they have hitherto received has produced. They will deplore it, and perhaps be cast down by it, but they will no more think of surrender than they did the first day of the siege. After all, the situation is no worse now than it was then; if anything it is better, for France has risen, and Paris is admitted by the Prussians—who else would not have spent three months of inaction under its walls—to be impregnable by force, while it is no less certain that the day of its capture through mere hunger is still far distant.

I presume that the sortie which was expected to take place to-day will now be postponed until further news is received from the outside. The time will not be lost, however, for there is a great deal yet to be done in the way of recasting the various corps which suffered at the battles of Villiers, and the war companies of the National Guard are still being armed and equipped. Their dresses become more and more fantastic as time goes on. I saw

the last dressed company depart yesterday for the front, in the most picturesque sky-blue overcoats, with the cantinière marching in front also in sky-blue. The National Guard does not shine by its discipline or its morals. Every day brings fresh complaints and fresh punishments. Sometimes it is a company which has run away when no man pursued—generally a company belonging to Belleville, by the way. At other times it is a guard which has solaced its leisure by breaking into the cellar of the house where it is posted, there to drink the confiding proprietor's wine and to walk off with his potatoes; or else a drunken sergeant takes a captain, a lieutenant, and a score of men, breaks into a poor girl's room, and carries her off half naked, under the pretence that she is a Prussian spy. These incidents are all recounted in Friday's papers, and it seems to be considered that they are sufficiently punished at most by 10 days' imprisonment. One National Guard who was told off as sentry to protect the meat at the abattoir, and who took the opportunity to walk off with a whole sheep, was even acquitted yesterday because he declared that he had taken it for his family. I am afraid they are a very poor lot altogether.

Fort Vanves is very quiet this morning. Last night it threw a few shells among the Prussians when they began to work, but to-day it has done nothing. The extreme Prussian outposts are only some 300 yards off, but the sentries have quite given up worrying each other, and reserve their ammunition for more serious work. From the window of the room where I am writing I can see the heights of Châtillon rising immediately in front, crowned by trees and by a new-looking bank of earth, which is the only visible result of the Prussian labours. To the left is the village of Châtillon itself, which looks so near that one could almost

throw a stone into it. Around the squat, square church tower are clustered the houses, their windows all wide open, their walls full of the gaping holes which mark the passage of the Vanves shells, their roofs in many instances gone, and their chimneys toppling over at a dangerous angle. The village is full of Prussians, but they are, of course, invisible, though we know that there is many an eye watching us from the farther and darker side of the rooms lit by those open windows. Below me, in the fort, the Mobiles are washing their scanty supply of linen, while the butchers are bringing in the day's supply of horse—red and horrible lumps of meat transfixed by long stakes. In one corner a group of officers are having their portraits taken by a photographer, and are in turns assuming that "natural posé" which is known so well to all civilised Europe. There is trumpeting, of course, at short intervals, and in the room above I hear a soldier performing, very creditably, a selection from the "Traviata" on the harmonium. Here comes a loud report, which shakes the room. It is only one of the mortars, but it rattles about the building as though the foundation had been blown up. Repeat these little incidents *ad infinitum*, and you have an exact picture of the most exciting incidents of fort life, which has become very dull to the troops after the three long months that most of them have passed here. There is a mixture of troops in this particular fort—sailors, artillerymen, line, and Mobiles, the latter still regarded with patronage, if not with contempt, by the "regulars." In one respect, however, the Mobiles have to my mind greatly the advantage. Their officers are quite of a different stamp from those of the regular army—less military, perhaps, but much more cultivated and more gentlemanly altogether. Nothing in the world will ever make them look like soldiers, and one sees

in them the better class of Frenchmen, just as one sees in their men the peasant, roughly covered with a uniform, which they wear as though they utterly despaired of making anybody believe that it was ever made for them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PARISIANS.

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Dec. 16.

THIS siege seems to have brought about a striking change for the better in the Parisians. Their doings and sayings during the first month could only be regarded with pity and contempt, and it is not to be wondered at that outside observers should have conceived so mean an opinion of the defence when they saw that the main and every apparent efforts of those who directed it were employed in changing the names of streets, and in carrying wreaths to the Strasburg statue, while the absurd spy mania and the incredible antics of the National Guard contributed to excuse the phrase attributed to General Burnside, that the city was "Une maison de fous habitée par des singes." For at least a month past, however, things have worn a very different aspect; the Parisians have left their heroics and vapouring, and have really settled down to the work of defence in a grim and serious manner. What is most striking, however, is that they appear to have even lost now that extraordinary conceit which made them regard themselves as the one chosen people, and their city as the one idol of the universe. Every day they seem to think less of themselves and more of their country; and while at the beginning of the siege they held that France only existed in order to save Paris, they are now quite prepared to sacrifice Paris if by that means they can only succour France.

These reflections are forcibly impressed upon me by the manner in which I find the news published this morning is received. There is no doubt that, as I have already remarked, the events announced make the situation of Paris infinitely more hopeless than it seemed previously to be. In fact, they reduce its *rôle* to one of passive and unsupported resistance, with a certain Prussian occupation at the end of it; for it is not now believed that any effort made by the garrison alone can relieve the city. The prospect is now the hopeless one of merely waiting for the end of the food, and yet the Parisians have accepted the news which reduces them to this really with joy rather than with discouragement, for they learn that their resistance has enabled France to raise armies in every corner of the land, and to meet the invader in every province; and in the confidence that continued resistance on their part will give further time to the country, they are nerved to renewed constancy. "Paris," they say now, "may fall, "probably must fall, but every day that she resists raises "the strength of France, and that is enough to make us "hold out to the last." Such is the substance of all that I find written and hear said with regard to the morning's news, and it discloses a devotion and a want of selfishness of which I confess I should not have thought the Parisians capable, and of which I still believe they would not have been capable three months ago. The siege has been a hard but a good school for them, and instead of leaving the capital humiliated and disgraced before the country, it is very likely to give it an undreamt-of opportunity of acquiring a claim to the gratitude and taking a hold upon the affections of the provinces such as it has never yet possessed.

Let Prussian statesmen look to it and bethink themselves whether they have not overreached their objects in

giving to Paris the opportunity of learning exactly the kind of lesson it required to reinstate itself in the minds of the French.

Dec. 19.

We are on the eve of another great sortie, which (to copy the style of M. Gambetta's despatches as amended for Paris reading) will take place on ——, in the direction of ——. I could fill up the blanks, but it would be dangerous to do so, for the ways of balloons are strange. I may say, however, that the affair will be a great trial of the National Guard, which will be called upon to do serious soldier's work, and to show what stuff they are made of, or rather what stuff they have been made into, during the time that has been available. They are certainly not lacking in courage, but their training is necessarily very defective, and their discipline exceedingly lax. Of late they have been gibbeted every day in the *Journal Officiel* in a most merciless and not very wise manner. On Saturday we had a long account of a lieutenant of the 76th battalion tried for inciting to insubordination, and who turned out to be a thrice-convicted thief; while on the same day we were informed that as soon as the war companies of the 200th arrived at Créteil the general in command telegraphed—"Commandant drunk; half the men drunk," and insisted on having them recalled. These incidents, added to various exploits of burglary and outrage which have been equally recorded, are such as might probably be matched out of an equal number of any troops extant—certainly out of an equal number of French troops; but they have been made perhaps unnecessarily notorious by the largest type of the Government journal, and they are calculated to produce a very bad impression. Their purely fighting qualities have still to be thoroughly tried, and they will probably now be made to bear the

brunt of battle. It is but fair, for up to this time it is the provincials rather than the Parisians who have defended the capital, and it is now the turn of the citizens themselves, who, in the form of the National Guard, will now have to bear their active part of the defence. I cannot help thinking that before the splendid troops that they will have to meet they will simply fall to pieces. I look forward indeed with the greatest apprehension to this next sortie. That which was made on the 30th November had a very good chance of success, and in the event, which happened, of failure, the retreat was a safe one. I confess I should prefer to be as well satisfied upon that point on the present occasion as I was upon the last; but I greatly fear a great disaster, which if it happens to the National Guard will be more serious and more pregnant with consequences in every way than if it happened to the regular army.

It is very strange to walk now through the streets of Paris after dark. Gas has entirely disappeared, and that without any warning, since the last three days, and its place is taken by infrequent petroleum oil-lamps, which cast a yellow and fitful light from the top of the lamp-posts. Many persons have begun to go about with lanterns; but the streets are almost deserted soon after dusk. I cannot give a stronger illustration to those who know Paris of the change that has taken place in that respect than by saying that when I passed the Café Anglais to-night, soon after nine o'clock, it was already shut up, though a light still burned in the well-known "grand "sieze," where an extravagant party was probably trying to forget in unnaturally late hours the horrors of the siege. They are, indeed, beginning to be felt. I remember the time when I used to pity the agricultural labourer because he only ate meat once or twice a-week, but I don't think I have eaten any for a fortnight,

and I find myself none the worse. I think I shall respect prejudices henceforth for ever, for in spite of all attempts I cannot eat horse, and I live entirely upon vegetables, bread, and jam, the last of which articles of food I have, I may say, almost discovered since the siege, for I was hardly aware before that it existed unless in the shape of marmalade, and I am not certain that that is a jam. Salt and preserved meats there still are, though they are very nasty, and those who choose to pay for it may even eat beef, but it is rare. After all, jam is a very good substitute for it. Cat, rat, donkey, peacock, elephant, pelican, camel, and even wolf find consumers at high prices, and at the outposts even stranger things are eaten. A Franc-tireur tells me that he made an excellent dinner off a crow and dahlia root. The dahlia especially he considers superior to any vegetable he knows. These are not the only things that the outposts produce, however. A member of the club to which I belong here has come in to-day from a reconnoissance with the excellent news that he has bought a cow for us, price 800fr. This is a great secret, and we are in much fear lest the precious animal should be requisitioned on its way to our kitchen.

Yesterday there was published a second despatch from Gambetta, dated the 14th. It shows that the situation has not changed since the 11th to any purpose, and that the Army of the Loire, cut in two, is still held in check by Frederick Charles. It shows, however, that the army exists, and that is something for France, though it is not much for Paris; and Gambetta announces, though not with certainty, that in the north General Faidherbe has taken La Fère, with a great quantity of munitions. On the other hand, I am informed that the Prussians have occupied Dieppe and Fécamp, which looks as if they were going on to Havre, where they would find immense stores

of provisions. General Manteuffel appears to be in command of their forces in that direction; but isolated as he is, he is in a dangerous situation if General Briand has the troops and the ability to deal with him. Every fresh item of news seems to make the situation more hopeless for Paris, but the Parisians have by no means lost heart; on the contrary, they are more determined than ever, and at the same time far less conceited and frivolous.

Dec. 20.

There is nothing new this morning; all was quiet through the night. I am going to try and find General Ducrot's staff. Inside Paris nobody seems to know where it is. By the way, the gates were all pitilessly shut yesterday at twelve o'clock, and nobody allowed to pass either way. This is always the sign that action is imminent.

WOUNDED.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SORTIE OF LE BOURGET.

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Dec. 21.

THE attempt on the Prussian lines was fixed to begin to-day, and I was begged to sleep at the rendezvous, "with "my horse," and in my boots, which was done accordingly. At half-past three o'clock this morning we were on foot, and turned out into the dark streets, which were full of a strange, confused hum of voices and the rattle of the *générale*. No stars, no moon, grim black darkness and cold everywhere—a state of things which did not improve the endless delays to which we, in common with all things and men in this city, were subjected. It was not till nine o'clock that I found myself at the Porte de Pantin (named since Troppmann's exploits the "Porte des Vertus"), and on my way to Drancy, to behold another attempt to meet disciplined troops with half-disciplined citizens, and, as I expected, another and more dismal failure. The way the thing is managed here is perfectly astonishing. Every kind of intimation is given to all who care to know what is coming off. On Sunday last a notice was placarded that the gates of Paris would be utterly and entirely shut at and from noon on the following day; a notice which, by the way, was so little acted upon that when on that day I went out for an expedition over the ground which I knew was to be the scene of the fight, the officer on guard not only let me through, but actually

refused to look at my pass, which was to me quite a refreshing novelty. But the notice was a well-understood warning that something was to come off; and yesterday all those who have any pretensions to be well-informed, and many who have no such pretensions, knew that the first object of the attack was to be Le Bourget, already once taken from and again lost to the Prussians. Nothing could be more complete, and if there are still spies here who have survived the great persecution, they must have known exactly what was to take place, and how it was to be managed.

The object to-day was to take Le Bourget, and then to advance to and beyond Blanc-Mesnil, and the attack was to begin at the break of day; but Admiral La Roncière, it appears, was two hours and a-half behind time, and when I left the walls of Paris the big guns were only just beginning to wake up in the fitful, half-hearted manner which betokens the opening of the ball. A large number of troops were passing, chiefly cavalry and artillery, all of them looking, I thought, in better condition and spirits than has been usual of late, and among others a squadron of Spahis, some 150 of them, being all that there are in Paris. These warriors are very picturesque, with their flowing red cloaks and swathed heads, but they seemed quite frozen by the cold. Their horses are splendid little creatures. The captain, whose acquaintance I had already made at the outposts, told me that he had sold a lame horse yesterday to be eaten for 350fr.—by the kilogramme, of course. A little distance along the road I came upon two prisoners, Bavarians, looking very dirty and savage in their long boots and flat caps. The French troops received them in a very proper spirit, and a trooper bent down and shook hands with one of them, saying, "Pauvre camarade va!" which seemed to touch the Bavarian, who smiled painfully. A little before ten

o'clock I arrived at Drancy, and found the engagement going on in earnest.

This was the way of it:—Le Bourget was attacked at about eight o'clock, and was partially, indeed almost entirely, taken, with from eighty to 100 prisoners, who were sent to St. Denis. The Prussians, however, retook the village in a little over an hour afterwards, and from that time to the close of the day it was a mere duel of artillery. The French guns were posted just in front of and on the left of Drancy, and made great gaps in the Prussian columns; but they by no means had it all their own way, and one or two batteries were silenced by the enemy's fire, and had to be replaced by others.

Drancy, which was taken almost without firing a shot early in the day, was strongly occupied by French troops, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that they had already thrown up earthworks, behind which were sheltered several battalions of the National Guard, at a safe distance in the rear of the more serious and reliable troops of the line, and flanked by more artillery. Behind these again, and masked by the ground, were large masses of cavalry, which, however, were never called upon to act. Nor, indeed, were any of the rest, for the French artillery did not succeed in making a sufficient impression to warrant the chiefs in launching the infantry for the assault. Thus the day has ended pretty much as it began. The Prussians, I should judge, from the execution I saw, must have suffered a good deal, the French scarcely at all. They lost men—perhaps 150—in the first attack on Le Bourget; but exclusive of those there were scarcely thirty wounded in all, and those, of course, almost all artillerymen.

On my return to Paris I find that half the people here believe that Le Bourget has been taken and is held by the French. Several gentlemen, indeed, assure me that they

have the evidence of their own eyes, having seen the whole affair—at a safe distance, from Montmartre and La Villette. But I know that I left the artillery still firing into Le Bourget, and being answered therefrom, which is conclusive. The attack is to be resumed with daylight to-morrow, and I have to be out at five o'clock, so shall write no more.

I dined off dog last night. It is much better than horse; but then it was a pet dog, and only five months old —very like mutton.

Dec. 23.

'Yesterday morning I rose at the early hour of five, only to find one of the coldest-feeling mornings I have ever experienced out before me. The air seemed to take hold of one by the extremities in a particularly aggressive and offensive manner, so that after being out for five minutes it was difficult to distinguish which was one's nose and which one's hands and feet. There was to be an attack, however—the authorities announced it, the official report repeated it—so out I went, getting down every five minutes to run by the side of my horse, in the interest of the circulation. I left Paris by the Porte de Pantin, and followed the high road to the Moulin de la Folie, almost under the high plateau of Romainville on the right, while on my left hand and in front stretched the long plain which lies round the north-eastern side of Paris.

At La Folie I took the left-hand road through Bobigny, amid a straggling crowd of sad and frozen-looking soldiers, who, huddled up in scanty wrappers, and with their heads wrapped up in dirty handkerchiefs, looked dismal and most unmilitary. Bobigny is so knocked to pieces by shell that there is hardly a whole roof in it, and as I passed I found the soldiers stripping off the remaining doors and shutters to make fires. There is any amount of wood in

Paris, and it would not have taken a couple of hours to get out a supply; but nothing is foreseen here, not even cold weather in the middle of winter, and I am not sure that the troops do not prefer burning the shutters of the absent *pékin* to the wood of the Government. On such a day they might well be forgiven for burning anything they could find. There was an icy wind blowing across the plain that seemed to cut one in two; and the hardship of passing the night under it without any kind of preparation —in many, I may almost say in most instances, even without tents—must have been frightful. I found the men huddled up together in ditches, crouched over a few burning sticks, or simply lying together to keep a little warmth in them. The uniform had disappeared entirely, or only showed itself through the coverings in which the men were wrapped—old sacking, fragments of window curtains, dirty sheepskins, and here and there a white blanket newly issued by the Government. Poor creatures, there was none of the dashing soldier in them. They looked more like an impossibly wretched collection of half-starved paupers. Half starved they were too, for the supply of food, like the supply of everything else, had run short. It was a pitiful sight, and when one sees that this is war, it is enough to make one a partisan of peace at absolutely any price for the rest of one's days. Several of the men were found in the morning frozen to death at their posts.

As I drew near to Drancy I observed that there was no sound of cannonade to be heard, and although in answer to the inquiry I made on arrival I was told that "the attack "was about to begin," I had small faith in it; for whenever anything serious is to happen the forts and batteries always open before light, in order, probably, to prepare the Prussians. I waited, however, among the artillery time enough to breakfast, in a light and wholesome way, off a

biscuit and a bulb of garlic, and then, finding nothing begun, I went off along the lines to the left. Le Bourget —which is quite close to the road I followed, and which is strongly occupied by the enemy—was perfectly quiet, and so was everything in the French lines. By the time I arrived at St. Denis it was past twelve o'clock, and as I had not yet heard a shot fired, and felt convinced that there would be nothing done, I determined to pay a quiet visit to the tomb of the French kings, not so much, I fear—as an American gentleman whom I passed suggested—"to "have a pray," as to see if the war had interfered in any way with the cathedral. A sentry posted at the door stuck his bayonet out offensively, and forced me to go to Admiral La Roncière for a special pass, the necessity for which I understood when I was inside; for the cathedral has been transformed into a centre of offence and defence of a character entirely at variance with its original destination —indeed a powder magazine is established immediately under the high altar. St. Denis itself is occupied chiefly by National Guards; even the verger who showed me over the cathedral had exchanged his black gown and wand for the képi and the sabre, though he had happily retained his verger tone and manners, which made him supremely amusing. He was an old soldier, sixty-nine years of age, who had volunteered into the war company of his battalion, and been returned into the sedentary companies as being too old for the service, which, indeed, he is, especially now that the service includes living in a ditch for an indefinite period without food, fire, or shelter.

I returned to Drancy by Corneuve, by and beyond which there are some formidable batteries established, with the guns pointed on Le Bourget. At Drancy, and along the whole line, things were still quite quiet, so I went back to Paris, not sorry to get out of the cutting wind and the cold.

To-day has produced absolutely no incident, unless it is the publication of a proclamation by King William to his people. This document shows that the resistance of Paris and the provinces is beginning, in spite of all their affected pity and contempt, to occupy and to disquiet the Prussians. They will be more disquieted before they have done with it. Probably they are convinced by this time that Paris, at any rate, will resist to the very last moment, and that last moment is much farther off than they imagine. We have any amount of bread and wine, and our first crop of vegetables which have been raised on the open spaces in and about the city has now become available. I had thought that the middle of February would see out the provisions, but I am now assured that they will last considerably beyond that; and up to this time I have not found exaggeration in this particular, but rather the reverse. As for the spirit of the people, it is as good as ever, and not a word of capitulation is breathed, much less a wish for it.

I hear from General Ducrot that there is to be an affair to-morrow.

Dec. 25.

There are some two millions of people here who are not likely to pass a very merry Christmas this year; but with that determination to be cheerful even under the most adverse circumstances which marks the French, and especially the Parisians, they are making the holiday show of toys and trinkets which this season always produces, and are even producing feeble attempts at displays of a more festive kind. On the boulevards are beginning to grow up the wooden huts as usual, and as usual they offer to the passer-by the most extraordinary collections of those utterly useless articles which people delight to give to each other as presents. The vendors of knick-knacks, however, have this year no chance of vying in interest with the vendors

of eatables. Some of the latter display fine turkeys, and *poulets truffés,* and one has even a fine salmon in his window, all which recall the old times of Paris, but which now are looked upon with wonder by the crowds whose eating has now long been limited to horse and donkey. "Ca doit être empaillé," was the remark I heard, but it showed a want of knowledge of the situation. There are still great stores of food in private hands as yet untouched, and among the rest a great many turkeys and chickens carefully hidden from the vulgar gaze. I am glad to say that I have seen this morning above a score of chickens, in which I have myself a beneficial interest; while the two sheep, which I think I have already mentioned, and on which my last hopes are founded, are excellently well, and well-disposed in a safe place. Everybody who has a store of this kind is of course keeping it for the last extremity, and the result will be that we shall live infinitely better at the end of the siege than we have done at the beginning and in the middle of it. It is not the least strange of all the strange features of this state of investment that provisions, instead of diminishing, seem really to become more plentiful. For some time past it has been very difficult to purchase preserved meats and vegetables, but since the last few days they have reappeared from some mysterious depths, and now the shops are piled up with them. Revolution and starvation were the two allies on which M. de Bismarck counted for a speedy reduction of Paris, but they have up to this time entirely failed him; and as for starvation, the nearer we get to it the farther away it seems to be. If the humane William has really bought and brought provisions for the day of surrender, I hope he will take care that they don't spoil, for it will be a long time yet before we want them.

The engagement which was opened on Wednesday last

was to have been continued yesterday, and I went out early in the morning to the scene of the expected action. The cold was worse than ever (10 degrees below freezing point), but there was less wind, and a bright sun made things look more lively. Yesterday no less than 300 men were, I am told, brought in frost-bitten—some of them, indeed, frozen to death. To-day, however, I found the troops installed with comparative comfort. They had dug pits some five feet deep in the ground, had covered them with doors and shutters—in fact, with any planking they could find—and had then lit their fire in one corner, left open at the top to let out the smoke. In these pits they were well protected, and might live any time. I breakfasted in one of them, so I speak from experience, and I found it for all essentials as comfortable as any drawing-room could be this weather. Drancy is very badly knocked about between the French and the Prussians, both of whom have shelled it at different times. The church steeple is riddled like a cullender, and on every side the streets are covered with heaps of stones and mortar, belched out of great gaps in the houses. The village is very strongly occupied, and I found numbers of soldiers wandering about with hatchets in search of woodwork of any kind for their fires. All the doors had already disappeared, and even window frames were beginning to be scarce. I suppose by this time there will not be a bit of wood left in Drancy. On the outside of the village, facing Le Bourget, which is not above 1000 yards off, stands the château, a handsome structure, not unlike some of our best English country houses, and standing in a large park. The stables face the road, or rather did, for nothing is now left of them but one wall. Round the courtyard inside were ranged a score or so of fine orange trees, frozen and melancholy, the yellow leaves of which were being curiously explored by

the horses of a battery of artillery which had been tied to them. Such a spectacle as the château itself I never saw. The four walls were standing almost intact, but it seemed as if the whole of the interior had been smashed and pounded into one heap of ruins, which rose to what was once the first floor, and overflowed through the windows in heaps of stones and woodwork, while here and there a delicate moulding, the shaft of a column, or a fragment of balustrade, was still to be seen hanging insecurely in its old position. The park was full of troops, and at the wall were several batteries of heavy guns, immediately in front of which again was the trench of the extreme outposts. I can safely tell you this, because the Prussians are quite close enough to see everything. At this point they line the railway some 250 yards off, and we could see them quietly walking backwards and forwards in their trench as we were doing in ours, neither side paying the least attention to the other beyond a jealous observation, for sentry shooting has quite gone out of fashion. I followed the line to the right, past a little cemetery, the trees of which were being cut down, and more batteries, till I came opposite the farm of Groslay —a point which bulges out from the French lines, and which is also strongly occupied, being much exposed.

Thence I returned to Fort Aubervilliers, where I was told that General Ducrot was installed. This fort, which was but a short time ago one of the worst, is now one of the best armed round Paris, and has some extraordinarily large pieces of artillery. The space inside is very large, but it is protected by traverses formed by strong baulks of timber. I found the staff in a house near the fort, and learnt that there would be nothing that day, nor probably on the morrow, in the direction of Le Bourget, so I rode over across the hard country to Bondy, where I heard some heavy artillery firing going on. This village is even in a

worse state than Drancy; indeed, a large proportion of the houses are not merely pierced, but utterly smashed. In a large one which has escaped with a few holes and broken windows, and which stands by itself among a heap of ruins, I found the commandant of the artillery just going out to visit his batteries, and whom I accompanied. We met a regiment of Zouaves coming from the trenches, where they had passed the night. They looked half-frozen, wrapped up in their short cloaks, but marched along gaily, glad to get to their soup and shelter. The Canal de l'Ourcq, which passes here, is lined with batteries of the most powerful kind, which were shelling the farm of La Nonnerie, making beautiful practice, and going into the farm at every shot.

The "pièces de Trente de Campagne," which have been recently mounted upon carriages of a novel and ingenious kind, are most useful in the present phase of the siege. They are very heavy guns, throwing a shell of 72lb., but they are moved about with almost as great a facility as the lightest field artillery, thanks to the carriages on which they are mounted. The Prussians made no reply to the shelling, as, indeed, it was not likely they either would or could, and as it was getting late I returned to Paris, where, I am happy to say, a good dinner (including a fine pike) awaited me.

Dec. 26.

I had been told to hold myself ready for an action to-day, and was early afoot, but I had hardly got through the horrors of my tub when I received intelligence that nothing was to be done. When the military report appeared it announced that in consequence of the severe weather the operations are to be suspended for the present, and that a portion of the troops are to be brought back into Paris. It is a wise measure, for they can always be sent out again in

a couple of hours, and there are quite enough left to keep the positions against attack.

The newspapers are still full of extracts from German journals found on the Prussian wounded and prisoners, and which seem to show that there is considerable discouragement among them at the duration of the siege. The amusing part of it is that they seem to be quite astonished and even hurt at the obstinacy of the Parisians. They will probably be more surprised before they have done with it, and certainly they will have a deal more time in which to become tired. There is a rumour, said to be based on an extract from English journals of the 11th inst., that England is to let everything slide, including Holland, Luxembourg, and Constantinople, in consideration of receiving Egypt. The rumour is, of course, believed here, and it is unnecessary to say that the reflections on her conduct are not complimentary. The *canard*, however—for of course it is one—is too evidently the invention of a French journalist to need consideration.

Dec. 27.

The siege drags along in a very humdrum, business-like sort of way, and we have become so used to all its incidents and little privations, that it seems difficult to believe we have ever lived under any other conditions. Sometimes, however, one gets a glimpse, as it were, of ordinary life, and then the contrast is startling, and one begins to pity one's self. Thus on Saturday I was out at five o'clock in the morning. It was dreadfully cold. Every creature I met had big icicles of frozen breath hanging on his moustache and beard, and all were wrapped and swathed in coverings of the most ludicrous and unmilitary description. The troops had burrowed holes in the ground, in which they huddled together miserably to keep themselves warm, while the sentries watched the Prussians lay

down their guns and beat the ground with their half-frozen feet. My breakfast consisted of an inadequate biscuit, a bulb of garlic (which I thought delicious), and a draught of wine from my *bidon*, and all day long I rode among scenes of horror and desolation, a bleak, bare country, smashed houses, frozen men, and starved horses, which looked up piteously at the passer-by from a fruitless search for herbage. Yet one so soon becomes accustomed to everything, that these sights make little impression at the time. I felt quite as comfortable in the burrow where I breakfasted as in the most luxurious and best furnished of rooms, and I am sure I enjoyed my breakfast more; while cold very soon becomes a matter of course, as do also miserable men and ruined houses. But I had been invited to dinner on that day; and when I found myself consuming pike (!), beef, eggs, sauces of a superior description, plum-pudding, and rare wines, in a Christian dining-room, and when, above all, we retired after dinner to coffee and cigars, in a soft, warm red drawing room, before a big fire, then I began to think what an uncomfortable life I am leading, to sigh for the flesh-pots of London, and to see that there is something after all that is pleasant in the appliances of civilisation, including even fire and furniture. Good dinners are demoralising in these times, but fortunately they are scarce, or we should all be intensely disgusted with our lot.

I have passed a good deal of time lately among the detached forts, chiefly in Vanves, Vincennes, and Aubervilliers. I don't imagine the Prussians will attack them (as for Vincennes they couldn't if they would); but if they do they will come to grief, for the artillery is strong enough to crush any force that may advance against it. Vanves especially is a charming spectacle from that point of view, but dull enough as a place to live in. The officers are

laying in a store of sparrows, which they catch and imprison in cages, there to be fattened with a view to pie, which may relieve the horse fare of daily life. The Prussians, however, are amusing to watch from this fort, and as they have begun to work again on their batteries, they may be seen trooping along in great numbers, with spades and picks on their shoulders, on the opposite heights of Charmart and Châtillon. Forts, however, are to be reserved for by-days, for of late we have been having more fighting in the open.

There is still a very bitter feeling against England, and the papers are daily full of the most irritating remarks. These have so much provoked me that I have written a long letter to the *Journal des Débats*, which seems to have been honoured with some attention, for four or five papers have answered me—of course declining entirely to believe that England has acted otherwise than in the most egotistical and perfidious manner. But nothing is too bad or too absurd for them to believe about Albion. They are at this moment all engaged in lifting up their eyes and moralising over a "solution which England has adopted" of European complications—the gist of which is that she is about to take possession of Egypt! They firmly believe it, and will continue to believe it, even when it has been shown to be nothing but the sensational invention of a Parisian journalist.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BOMBARDMENT OF THE FORTS.

Dec. 28.

"Ah! Ils commencent à nous canarder — alors c'est qu'ils doivent être joliment embêtés." Such was the remark which passed from one Parisian to the other yesterday afternoon. In effect at the break of day the enemy had opened a regular bombardment from twelve heavy batteries established in the park of Raincy, at Gagny, at Gournay, and at Noisy le Grand, upon the Fort of Rosny and the plateau of Avron. This plateau is a broad spur, lying in front of the fort and over the Marne, and has been occupied in force since the affair of the 30th November, as far as Ville Evrard and the Maison Blanche. It is an excellent position, bulged out into the Prussian lines; and they probably are greatly disgusted at having lost it, and quite alive to the danger of leaving the French in quiet possession of it. All day yesterday they poured a perfect hail of shells upon the position and upon the adjoining forts. The result is not likely, if they get to hear of it, to encourage them. The plateau of Avron was covered with troops, and it was swept entirely by the fire; the forts were in a scarcely less dangerous situation; and yet the whole damage done throughout the day is represented only by 55 men wounded and 8 killed. As for the forts, Rosny only had two men touched, and Nogent three, yet they were shelled from daylight till dusk. I have already remarked

that a bombardment sounds much more dreadful than it really is, and there could not be a better proof of it than yesterday's experience. It is not one shell in a hundred that really does harm to anything else than the ground, or the walls and windows of buildings. The fact will not be lost sight of if the Prussians bombard Paris; and should they do so they will only exasperate still further, and will by no means frighten, the population.

The firing was renewed heavily this morning, and I went out to see for myself what it was like. As I passed through Montreuil I heard the Prussian guns plainly and heavily, and occasionally the slighter and nearer explosion of their shells, but I could not make out that Rosny was answering them. At the last houses of the village I found a number of ambulance carriages and a crowd of National Guards peering curiously but cautiously out from behind the walls on which grow the famous Montreuil peaches, while some 330 yards off was the Fort of Rosny, bare, black, and silent. "Il ne faut pas avancer, il tombe des "obus en masse," said one of them to me, and at that moment there came the now familiar hiss, and an explosion which knocked up a good deal of earth between us and the fort. Remembering "Midshipman Easy's" calculation of the chances against two balls striking in the same spot, I went right across the place where the shell had fallen into the fort. The stonework of the gateway showed a great gap freshly made, and instead of the crowd that generally encumbers the entrance to a fort there was but one sailor sentry, who was carefully backed up against the wall. Out of a dark doorway as I passed through, however, came first a voice, and then a quartermaster, with the inevitable demand for the laisser-passer. Strangely enough, it was the same man who was in command of the guard when upwards of three months ago I last entered Fort

Rosny as a captured Uhlan. He remembered me, and when I asked for General Vinoy, volunteered to show me the way with the interest of an old friend. The fort was so changed since my last visit that it was scarcely recognisable. I then gave no description of it, and I may now say that the reason for my silence was that I could but have given a catalogue of work to be done, and have presented a most lamentable picture of unreadiness. Then it might have been taken by the Prussians almost without firing a shot, for although it possessed cannon they were none of them in position, and if they had been, there were not fifty rounds of ammunition in the magazine. Now it would cost them 10,000 men to take it, and I doubt their succeeding even at that price. Then the whole of the interior was a flat open space; now it is cut up by high and thick traverses of earth into a series of alleys, each of which is protected against any shells except such as fall directly into it. Then there were a few field-pieces on the ramparts, and a few heavy guns lying disconsolately on the ground; now the field-pieces have disappeared, and the walls bristle with heavy *pièces de marine*, the least of which throws a shell of 50lb. Then the barracks might have been knocked to pieces with a single shell; now they are carefully and completely *blindés* with earth and timber. In short, the most complete transformation has been effected, and I have never been so much struck with the amount of work that has been done as by comparing the former with the latter state of this fort.

For the matter of that, I was enabled personally to appreciate the change, for as I followed my guide through the zig-zags of the traverses I heard a shell come hissing with a force and in a direction which seemed to make it certain that it must hit me. It was not very far off either, for it fell in the passage just behind me, which I

had just left, and there exploded, without so much as throwing an atom of dust upon me. It was a narrow escape, nevertheless, and had I been walking half a mile an hour slower you would have seen the last of your correspondent. We ran the rest of the way across a little open space, and found ourselves before the chapel, which is simply one of the bomb-proof chambers wherein the garrison is now lodged—a low, arched room, with a curtain of enormous baulks of timber before the door. In it I found General Vinoy and his staff engaged in reading off the despatches, which were arriving freely, as the rapid tick-tick of the telegraph disclosed. The general is a fine old gentleman, as straight as a poplar, in spite of the seventy-one years he is said to number, but which, from his appearance, one would be inclined to diminish by at least a third. He is very popular in the army, and is held by military men to be the best, if not the only good leader in Paris, and they are surprised that he is not more employed—a fact for which they find all kinds of explanations, each more unfavourable than the other to General Trochu. I may say that it was this that induced me to seek his acquaintance, and I have been most favourably impressed with what I had the advantage of seeing of him this morning. He is very quiet, very workmanlike, by no means a fine talker, and evidently not a man who would think of swearing only to re-enter Paris "dead or victorious."

The shells were still coming, not indeed very thickly, but always in pairs, with an interval of perhaps three minutes between each pair, and all of them either into or beyond the fort. "Vous sentez, vous le courage de monter "là-haut?" asked the general, pointing to the top of the rampart, and immediately led the way. There was not a soul there, except at one corner, whence an occasional shell was sent in answer to the Prussians, for the rest of

the garrison was safely and wisely put under shelter, and even the sentries kept themselves well out of sight. From one of the bastions we had a fine view of the positions. There was a thin fog lying over the country, but the snow lay everywhere like a vast sheet, and every object that broke through it was distinctly visible. In front rose the plateau d'Avron, which, separated from the fort by a valley, stands in front of it like a natural advanced guard —such as indeed it was. Just on the left of the plateau, separated from it by a valley, and somewhat farther off, the houses of Villemonble and Gagny stood upon the flank of a hill, their outlines sharply drawn upon the snow. Here are three of the Prussian batteries, which were engaged in a heavy duel with those on the plateau. The air was dark enough to enable us just to catch the flashes of the guns, and heavy enough to hold the smoke on each side in a thick white cloud over the batteries. Farther to the left is the park of Raincy, a fine hill in front of the black mass of the Forest of Bondy, and it was from the batteries there established that the greater part of the shells came into Rosny. After some time (about one o'clock), the Prussian fire from Gagny became more intermittent, and at last it ceased altogether, whereupon the plateau d'Avron also became silent. If they have suffered there to-day as little as Rosny, they are well off, for there has not been a casualty in the fort. The buildings, indeed, have been knocked about—a chimney or two has been carried away, and two big holes have been made in the wall of the barracks. Moreover, one shell fell and exploded on the powder magazine, but the *blindage* was too much for it, and it did not penetrate even through the first layer of sandbags, which was lucky, for in this magazine was stored the whole of the powder for the artillery on the plateau d'Avron. This plateau is, however, held to be

untenable, having no works upon it, and General Vinoy is preparing for its evacuation.

Coming down from the ramparts, we now walked through the fort to and out of the gate, where two other generals were awaiting General Vinoy. I returned now to Paris, impressed with the fact of this two days' bombardment, but seeking in vain a satisfactory explanation for it, unless in an intention on the part of the Prussians to take the plateau d'Avron. But if they take it they cannot hold it, for it is directly under the fire of Rosny and Nogent. And then why do they take the offensive now, after three months and a half of simple investment, which must soon bring Paris to a starving point? Is it only because they have lost patience, or is it that the armies of the provinces have had a success which makes it necessary to bring matters to a close before Paris? And why do they begin with the eastern instead of the southern side, where their advantages are so much greater? Probably we shall be able to answer some of these questions within a day or two.

Dec. 31.

The unexampled severity of the winter has suddenly brought home to us the fact that fuel is as great a necessity of existence as food, and during the last few days there has been a perfect panic with regard to it. The military authorities talk and write as though cold weather in the end of December had taken them entirely by surprise, and the civil authorities seem to be very much in the same pass. They have thought a good deal about food, but not at all apparently about fuel, and there was no sooner an increased demand for it than the supply melted away and disappeared. We live, however, very much as they did in Israel when there was no king, and every man did that which seemed right in his own eyes. Accordingly, the poor, observing that there was a deal of wood about belonging to somebody,

decided that it ought in these times to belong to them; and on Tuesday last a whole army of them went out, armed with hatchets and saws, and quietly set to work to tear up and cut down first the palings round the waste grounds, then the scaffoldings of abandoned houses, and finally even trees in the gardens of houses not at all abandoned. Thus the greater part of the thick wooden barrier that runs along the Avenue de l'Impératrice (or the Avenue Uhrich, as it is now baptised) has already disappeared, and many of the trees with it, and in every direction one came across men, women, and children engaged in a work of spoliation which would soon have left Paris without a visible piece of timber of any kind. As for police, there is none. The new *gardiens de la paix* are well aware that they are put there to do nothing, and they do it most conscientiously, while the National Guard interfered, indeed, a little with the marauders, but as often as not only in order to help itself to a share of their booty, and sometimes, indeed, to effect a little private plundering of its own. On Thursday, however, the Government intervened with a mild notice on the subject, pointing out, which is perfectly true, that there is in and about Paris, including the woods of Boulogne and Vincennes, fuel enough and to spare, and promising a sufficient supply for all wants, to be furnished in the ordinary way by means of purchase at the *chantiers'*. That has, for the moment, put a stop to marauding, but the *chantiers* have not been able to meet the demand upon them, and it is simply impossible to get fuel by any of the ordinary means, as I know to my cost, for I am writing this by a fire which contains the last two logs I possess. It is merely the organisation which has failed, however, and those who can manage to keep themselves warm through 16 degrees of frost for the next two or three days will be able then to find as much fuel as they require, for the

most active measures are being taken at Boulogne and Vincennes, which are being simply carted away into Paris.

Another and a graver question which is mainly agitating here now for the first time is this, whether General Trochu ought not to be called upon to resign. The "Reds" have, of course, all along denounced him as a traitor, which he assuredly is not; but now even the more moderate are beginning to declare that he is an incapable, which, perhaps, he may be. The Government of the National Defence have from the beginning of the siege prostrated themselves before him in an adoration which is only to be explained by the fact that he is a fine talker, and that they, being lawyers and men of words, are greatly impressed by his talent. They begin to doubt, however, now that they see how very indifferently the promise of the words have been fulfilled by the acts of the Governor. They cannot help seeing that (not to mention the affair at Châtillon) there has been at once a want both of energy and of prudence in all the engagements to which he has led the troops. At the sortie on La Malmaison, Bougival might have been taken with a few more troops, and a little more perseverance. At the affair of Champigny the loss of a day over the bridges across the Marne warned the enemy and gave him time to prepare himself; while, after the retreat, a dash out on another point would have had a good chance of success. At Le Bourget, which had already been once taken and foolishly abandoned, an attack on the 21st, forcibly launched, might again have succeeded, whereas the day was lost in useless cannonading; and finally the plateau d'Avroh, instead of being inactively occupied for twenty-five days, during which scarcely a spadeful of earth was moved upon it, should either have been made impregnable, or have been used as a point of departure for further operations; or,

finally, should have been abandoned altogether. These are the faults which are found with Trochu's leadership, and there is a strong feeling, especially in the army, but also among civilians, that the time has come to try somebody else. The difficulty is to know who is to be put in his place, and as there is no one man in whom sufficient confidence is felt, the general verdict is for a permanent council of war, composed of three generals. It is almost as difficult, however, to choose three as one, and Vinoy, Ducrot, Tripier, Bellemare, La Roncière, and Chabaud-Latour have each and all their partisans. Trochu, however, who is vain and self-confident, will not give up his position unless absolutely forced to do so, and I doubt there being strength of purpose and firmness enough in the Government to produce the pressure required. This morning's *Officiel* contains a proclamation, which declares that there has been no dissension in the councils of the Government, "and "that the army is preparing for action." I remark, however, that the proclamation is signed by Trochu alone, a circumstance which, I need hardly say, greatly diminishes its value as a testimony to the union of the Government, and which makes it look merely like a proof that he is at union with himself. What I have written above is the substance of all conversation in the best informed and most intelligent circles, and I fancy there will be sooner or later a great explosion against the Governor, and that we are hard upon a crisis both for him and the Government.

The Prussians continued the bombardment of Nogent and Rosny during the whole of yesterday, but only wounded five men, three at the former and two at the latter fort. The plateau d'Avron had been evacuated and all the heavy cannon brought in on the night of Wednesday—a movement which, indeed, had been announced to me by General Vinoy in the morning. It was effected in the best

order, and so quietly that the Prussians continued to shell the plateau long after the last man had left it. The evacuation, however, has terribly disgusted the Parisians, and this it is which has swelled into a chorus of complaint the doubts as to General Trochu's ability which have silently been making way for the last three months.

Jan. 3.

The indiscretion of a newspaper correspondent, whom former experience of the diplomatic service might have made more cautious, has deprived the Parisian public of the few extracts from English journals with which they were once blessed, at long but regular intervals. Moreover, the pigeons have for the present entirely failed us; but news does nevertheless continue to come into Paris from various sources and through various channels, and not very bad news neither, for it appears that the provinces have at last really risen, and that they are falling upon the Prussian hosts in numbers, and with a courage and tenacity which make up to a large extent for their want of training and discipline. I went on Monday last to wish M. Jules Favre the "bonne "année," and I found him engaged with two other Ministers in checking off the progress which General Chanzy has made from the Loire, and in estimating the foundation of intelligence which had been received of his having gained a battle against Frederick Charles, or, as is more probable, against the Duke of Mecklenburg. From a note in Tuesday's *Journal Officiel* I presume that the conclusion was unfavourable to the rumour; but the Ministers were evidently in the possession of but little information on any point. One of them (M. Jules Simon), in the course of the conversation, mentioned a new method of communication, which is now being experimented upon, and which, if it can but be made to work, will make Paris entirely independent and careless of all investment. I fear,

however, that it will share the fate of the great "ballon "dirigeable" committed to M. Dupay de Lôme, who is fast approaching the end of the 40,000fr. allotted to him, and who appears to be no nearer a satisfactory result than when he started, now nearly three months ago.

The Prussians have given the eastern forts and the surrounding villages a very complete doze of bombardment, for they have scarcely ceased shelling for the whole of the past week. They might, however, have saved themselves a deal of trouble and powder if they had but known the absurdly small effect which their bombardment has produced. Since the evacuation of the plateau d'Avron (where indeed they did some mischief) the loss of men has been infinitely less than would have resulted from mere outpost "potting" in the same time. To give you an idea of the waste of ammunition in which they indulge, I may tell you that they threw 600 shells into Fort Nogent yesterday, and that the whole result of it all was one man slightly wounded, and perhaps fifty bricks, stones, and sacks of earth displaced. I don't know the exact proportion which by the rules of war gunpowder and iron are supposed to bear to human life, but it strikes me that 600 shells for one flesh-wound is rather a large expenditure. Why these extremely clever Prussians should throw away so much good ammunition passes comprehension; nor is it easy to understand why they should throw it all away on the eastern side, when on the southern they have so much better positions, and so much greater chance of frightening the Parisian citizen. Surely it cannot be that the eastern side is nearest to their line of retreat. They must not lose time at any rate now, that is certain, for they may experience reverses in the provinces, when they would be in a very unpleasant position indeed; and every day increases the chance of their meeting with such a reverse. Chanzy seems to have shown himself a good

general, and it is pretty well certain that at least he has not been defeated, or the Prussians would have sent us the news, as they did of d'Aurelles de Paladine's and Faidherbe's disasters.

Whatever has happened, however, or may happen, you may be certain that Paris will not surrender till the very last of the food is reached, and that will not be for a long time yet. The National Guard has improved in an extraordinary manner within the last few weeks; and although it could not be trusted for complicated manœuvres, I begin to think that for desperate stand-up fighting it may turn out to be better than the line and the Mobiles, who have hitherto done all there was to do. Most of the war companies have now had a taste of outpost duty, and it has seemed to consolidate and to improve them in quite an unexpected manner and with unexpected rapidity. Thus the 200th battalion, which arrived at its destination "mostly drunk" (including the commandant), has come back into Paris covered with the praise of the general under whose command it has served. The National Guards, being all townspeople, have suffered severely from the extraordinarily cold weather they have met outside; but their spirit is wonderful, and they cry out unceasingly every day and through every channel for a great sortie, which shall enable them to measure themselves against the Prussians. It must not be forgotten that the regular army and the Mobiles, who have hitherto been in front on all occasions, are provincials, who for the most part have no great love for Paris; but the National Guards belong to and are of the city itself. It is for their own property, their own homes, their own wives, children, and sisters that they will be fighting. It is an indication of the difference of spirit that exists that they have been nicknamed by the regular army "l'armée de la résistance à outrance," and they are

not unlikely indeed to prove more desperate antagonists than the Prussians have yet met before Paris. In a few days we shall probably have an opportunity of seeing what stuff they are made of.

The fuel panic seems to have been entirely appeased now, and the spectacle of citizens helping themselves to other citizens' wood is no longer to be seen. There is, however, great difficulty in obtaining anything to burn; but, as I have already remarked, it can only be temporary, for there is wood enough in and about Paris to keep us through two winters. As usual, however, the effect of the panic has been to induce everybody who can to lay in a store three times as large as they require, and the consequence is that there seems to be a dearth when in reality there is none. The same things happened a fortnight ago with bread, which for two days almost disappeared, having all been bought up the first thing in the morning by people who had taken fright. The Government remedy for all these difficulties is requisition and re-distribution, but in most instances the requisition only applies to merchants and shopkeepers, and does not affect private individuals. Horses are an exception to the rule, for they are all requisitionised without exception by the Government, and there is lamentation in every stable, for neither favour nor privilege avails to save the doomed animal. I myself have thus been deprived of the vicious but serviceable animal on which I have for the last three months "excurted" (forgive the tempting Americanism) to the outposts. There is, indeed, one way to save horses, which is to put them under the protection of the ambulance, and I indeed had a card of safety offered to me, but I did not think it right to avail myself of it. Perhaps I may have been influenced by the conclusion at which I have arrived, that under fire it is safer and more convenient to be on foot than on horseback. Horse is now

almost the only meat to be had; but those who cannot eat it may still take refuge in various strange animals at high prices. I have now dined off camel, antelope, dog, donkey, mule, and elephant, which I approve in the order in which I have written them, but none of which greatly captivate me. Horse is really too disgusting, and it has a peculiar taste never to be forgotten, and which I detect through all the disguises that even a Parisian cook can invent. Like a great many other people, I am forced by my squeamishness to live chiefly on bread and vegetables; but I find a consolation in the reflection that there are those in England who do so by choice. One circumstance worthy of remark is, that I find everybody declaring that they have never been so well in health in their lives as since they have been forced to curb their appetite.

Well (alas!) do I remember the trouble I have often had in London to choose between two good dinners on the same day; but I have never been so tried as this morning I am by two invitations which I received last night. One of them promises me "a rabbit," and the other announces nothing less than "a fish." I am half engaged to the former, or I should certainly go to the latter; but then half engagements are a small thing to those who have been accustomed to the throwing-over tactics of a London season. Now, shall I write to the rabbit and say I was previously engaged to the fish, or shall I go to the fish and tell him I am obliged to dine with the rabbit, taking care to let him know that I am very much open for to-morrow (he might make the rest of his fish into a *mayonnaise*), or for any other day he likes to name? It is a grave question; but there let it be for the present.

I have come hastily to the conclusion that there is nothing in presentiments. On Christmas Day I certainly had a strong presentiment—if there is such a thing—that

I should "have my ball," as the phrase here goes, at the next affair. On Monday and Tuesday I experienced the feeling still more strongly; and when on Wednesday morning I went out to Rosny I left Paris in very low spirits, and, I rather think, in a bit of a fright. When I arrived at the fort I found a very pretty shower of shells falling in and around it, and everybody hidden up in casemates and corners. The fire put my presentiment entirely out of my head, and I went through the gateway into the open space in the interior, and threaded my way through the banks of earth (or traverses to be military) with which it is covered to the chapel, and subsequently went down and out at the gate again with General Vinoy. There we met another general, and stood talking to him. Now comes the comical part of it. While we were standing there I heard the hiss and "grurr" of a shell flying straight at us. "By Jove!" I said to myself, "that's "mine!" and for the first time I "manœuvred," or in other words fell flat on my face. The shell exploded at least thirty yards off, and when I got up, covered with snow, I was disgusted with myself, all the more so because I saw that the generals had not moved. Nobody and nothing was touched, but I declare that I had a most horrid fright. If anybody laughs at me—which somebody certainly will—I hope he will some day himself go out to a bombardment with a presentiment and come back with a whole skin. As for me, either I don't do the presentiment rightly or else there is nothing in it. I incline to the latter opinion, and I don't think I shall manœuvre any more, not at any rate while the snow is on the ground.

I wonder whether people in England understand the way in which the ambulance corps really works. This is the way of it in Paris. Some energetic and consequential

individual takes the money and the management into his own hands, and with them enters at once (this is inevitable) upon a series of rows with rival establishments. When those rows are exhausted, or before, some of the other consequential individuals in the same ambulance get up an internal dispute of their own. Generally it takes the form of accusation that somebody has annexed some of the money, or requisitioned the coals, or consigned to too safe a custody in his own cellar the Imperial wine sent from the Tuileries for the wounded. Then come resignations, each preceded and followed by its own particular row. This is for the superior authorities, but the general staff all take more or less of a part in the free fight. Some of them complain absurdly of being unnecessarily fatigued by being kept up all night in order to go out only the next afternoon. Others are newspaper correspondents, and complain that they are taken out at the wrong time and to the wrong place, and never get a chance of seeing the battles of which the British public expects them to give a glowing account. In short, there never existed in this world such unhappy families as these humane societies are now in Paris. The only people who get value for their money are the newspaper correspondents, to whom the ambulance *brassard* offers the sole means of free passage through the gates and past the sentries. I say the only means, because I happen to know that, of the English correspondents, one only besides myself has succeeded in obtaining the sacred laisser-passer with the dry stamp which passes through everything, and even he has only had it within the last few days. As a rule, they see little or nothing, and the most spicy of the letters are mere warmings-up of the accounts gained by a judicious pumping of the returning soldiers. For those who really wish to see the battle, and who have got the pass, an ambulance brings only disadvantage, since it interferes with

liberty of action. I have felt this myself, for I was some time ago asked to allow myself to be put on the commission of a hard-working and very plucky ambulance, and to ride out with them on fighting days. A short experience has shown me, however, that it interferes fatally with one's liberty, and I have now given it up, and go out by myself on fighting days, just as I always have done upon the others.

We have had a very melancholy New Year's Day, and the wish that is *de rigueur* at this season takes the form rather of lamentation over the past than of hope for the present twelve months. The presents made on the *jour de l'an* have also changed lamentably in character, although they have not always diminished in price. Food and fuel are the most delicate gifts that can now be made. I myself presented four eggs to a lady, who overwhelmed me with gratitude for them.

Jean has just been to see me, having returned with a very red face from his month at the outposts. I asked him, "Est ce que ton bataillon s'est sauvé?" "Ah, "monsieur," he replied, naïvely, "nous ne nous sommes "pas trouvés dans le cas de nous sauver."

P.S. I have decided for the rabbit. How sold I shall be if it turns out cat!

CHAPTER XXIX.

BOMBARDMENT OF THE CITY.

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Jan. 5.

THE bombardment of Paris may be said to have commenced at last, on this the 110th day of the siege, for a couple of score of shells have fallen well within the walls, and several persons have been killed and wounded by them. The cemetery of Mont Parnasse, the garden of the Luxembourg, the Rue Gay Lussac, and all the adjacent quarters have received these visitors. A little girl coming out of school near the Luxembourg was literally cut in two by one, another killed a woman who was drawing a hand-cart, and a third wounded a babe in its cradle; besides which, two or three men have been wounded, and a number of houses more or less damaged. It might perhaps have been expected that the God-fearing and laws-of-war-respecting Prussians would have followed the ordinary usages in such cases, and would have given notice before bombarding a city full of defenceless people; but they have not done so, and have begun to shell women and children without a word of warning, and without even going through the formality of sending a summons to surrender, which, for all they knew officially, might have been accepted. But it is a favourite method of theirs to work upon their armed through their unarmed enemies. They have hanged and shot peasants, burnt villages, and robbed towns under menaces throughout the provinces in order to paralyse the

armies that opposed them; and now they bombard Paris in order thus to get the better of the garrison they have been unable to vanquish, and to silence the forts which they have been unable to take.

It may possibly be pretended that the shells that have been sent into Paris have fallen there through an error in the elevation, and that they were intended, not for the city, but for the forts. That excuse, however, if it should be made, will not serve. The Prussian batteries are ranged on the heights from Meudon, by Clamart and Châtillon, to Fontenay aux Roses. The forts of Issy, Vanves, and Montrouge, against which their fire has been directed to-day, lie in the low ground immediately under those heights which look clear down into them at an average distance of 1800 yards. Now, the walls are another 2000 yards beyond the forts, and it is therefore impossible that any projectiles intended for the latter should reach the former, and still more impossible that they should fall 2000 yards farther inside Paris. The shells that have arrived in the city have undoubtedly been projected into it advisedly, and have been intended for the population and the buildings which the Prussians have affected to regard with feelings of tenderness and humanity. I suppose nobody will now doubt that if they have not bombarded us before it has been, not from any squeamishness, but simply because they were not able to do it; and if they have not pressed forward their preparations more rapidly, it has been because they have been foolish enough to imagine that Paris could not hold out. As for humanity, they have never been so foolish as to take that into account.

The effect of the bombardment upon the population has been absolutely *nil*, so far as fright is concerned. I wrote some time ago that I was convinced the people would go to see the shells fall on the second day. I was more than

right in my opinion, for they have done so on the first day. They are an extraordinary people, these Parisians, "capables de toutes les lâchetés et de tous les héroismes," as one of them has remarked. The day after Châtillon a detachment of four men and a corporal might, I verily believe, have walked into and taken the city, and a single shell would have driven the entire population into the cellars, and produced a universal cry for capitulation. But now that they have heard the cannon for nearly four months they are only anxious to see what it is like to be near an exploding shell. As soon as it was heard that one had fallen in the Luxembourg garden and at Auteuil, those gardens were invaded by a crowd of idlers of every description—men, women, and children of all ages. It was an amusing sight when, after a long interval, a distant hiss was heard, to see them all fall flat on their faces; and still more amusing to see the eagerness with which, when a shell fell in sight, they all rushed at it to pick up the fragments. The boys especially were in their element, and those who were lucky enough to get them drove a thriving trade in *éclats d'obus*, which they sold at prices varying from three to ten francs each—a fine commentary, I thought, on the terror which shelling is supposed to produce.

Jan. 6.

The bombardment continued during the greater part of last night, and with some effect upon those for whom it is specially intended. In the Quartier Latin a *cantinière* of the National Guard was killed in her bed; six shells fell in the small space occupied by the wooden sheds of an ambulance behind the Luxembourg, necessitating the removal of the wounded, which has been effected this morning; and a large number have visited Auteuil, Grenelle, and Vaugirard, making some havoc among the houses,

but killing and wounding very few people comparatively—not more than a dozen altogether. I started in the morning to visit my old quarters at Fort Vanves, and as I passed through Vaugirard I saw in several houses nicely breached the marks of the work done by the amiable Prussians, while the almost uninterrupted sound of heavy guns showed that they were continuing it with unabated humanity. Outside the Porte de Vanves the shells were falling very thickly, and the whole plain was dotted with the bouquets of earth and stone, which produced the impression literally of a rain of iron. The prospect of walking through this shower a mile and a half, entirely in the open, to Fort Vanves, there to take refuge in a casemate with the garrison, did not appear inviting, nor, what is more important, likely to enable me to see anything particularly new. I decided, therefore, for discretion and a return to Paris, where iron was falling less thickly.

At the Porte de Vanves the sergeant congratulated me on my decision, and reminded me that it was not necessary to leave the walls in order to see shells. Several had fallen at the gate within the last hour, as, indeed, it was easy to see, for a house on the other side of the road showed a gaping hole in the wall, and had all its windows smashed, while on the rampart itself were two large holes, each made by an *obus*. As he was expatiating on these phenomena two indeed whistled lightly over the wall and fell in a piece of open ground close by, throwing up a fine shower of earth at a nice safe distance. The inhabitants seemed to be taking the whole thing quite as a matter of course. All the shops were open, and smart young women were lounging at the doors or sitting resplendent in their new year's ribbons behind the counter. Children wrapped up carefully against the cold were playing in the streets

among the legs of the sightseers, who, armed some of them with telescopes, were posted at various points of vantage, in the fond hope of "seeing the shells fly" (as several extremely keen-eyed Parisian journalists declare they have done!), and of picking up the pieces. One house I saw with a large hole in it, evidently the work of an *obus*, but the inhabitants had not even taken the trouble to remove from it, and one of them was pleasurably smoking his pipe out of the window of the story below that which the shell had traversed.

The bombardment has now lasted along the whole eastern and southern side of Paris for eleven days and nights almost without interruption; but it is more difficult than ever to guess what direct result these very clever Prussians expect to attain through it. They do positively no damage, and they must know it. During the whole time that they have been blazing away they have not dismounted above five guns or seriously injured a single fort. At the outside they have hit 300 men, including those on the plateau d'Avron, who figure for 150; but by far the greater number of them are very slightly wounded. Why, then, all this prodigal expenditure of saltpetre and iron? They cannot expect thus to reduce Paris, for they might hammer away at the same rate for a year without being any nearer that result. What seems to me possible is that for some reason or other they find it necessary to occupy, and, if possible, to frighten the Parisians. That reason may very well be that they have had to weaken the investing force in order to reinforce their provincial armies, or possibly that Chanzy or Bourbaki is menacing their rear in such a manner as to make it necessary to precipitate the final effort of which this bombardment is but the prelude.

I learn this evening from the highest authority that a

messenger has arrived in Paris from General Faidherbe with certain intelligence that Prince Frederick Charles has really been defeated and captured, though I am told the Government will not give its sanction to the news by publishing it, unless and until its confirmation is received from Gambetta. This information explains the otherwise strange and vague phrase of this morning's proclamation, which is thus worded—"La population de Paris . . . se "montrera digne de l'armée de la Loire, qui a fait reculer "l'ennemi, de l'armée du Nord, qui marche à notre secours"; and it may also explain the fact that a Prussian newspaper, the *Moniteur de Seine et Oise*, of the 2nd inst., found at Meudon by a Franc-tireur, contains no reference whatever either to Prince Frederick Charles or to his army, although it is filled with information from every other part of the seat of war.

Jan. 7.

The feeling of dissatisfaction with General Trochu is taking very threatening proportions, not only among the population, but also among the garrison. Among the line, the Mobiles, and, above all, in the ranks of the National Guard, I hear the same complaint bitterly made, that he is a feeble general of routine, that he has made a fine army and does not know how to use it; and everywhere I find the same eagerness for action. It is remarkable enough that the spirit of the people only seems to rise with their repeated reverses, and it bodes ill for the Prussians that the more the French are beaten the more anxious they are to begin again.

As for the National Guards, they are positively spoiling for a fight, and if Trochu does not lead them out shortly they will certainly make themselves very unpleasant. This state of feeling offers a tempting opportunity to the "Reds," who have all along declared that the only way to

obtain vigour, and to bring out all the strength of the country, is to act in Paris "revolutionnairement," as Gambetta has done in the provinces, to proclaim the Commune (or, in other words, a Committee of Government elected by the citizens), to turn out all *ci-devant* Bonapartists and suspected Royalists, to seize all the provisions in Paris and to distribute them equally and gratuitously, and to make sorties *en masse*, with the aristocrats in front and the patriots behind to keep them going at the point of the bayonet. This little programme they propose of course to carry out by a pure system of terror, but they have not hitherto made any kind of impression upon the public mind. Now, however, that people are disgusted with the inaction of Trochu, the Reds have seized the occasion, and yesterday they covered Paris with violent but well-written red placards, accusing the Government of incapacity which must lead to capitulation, and once more declaring that salvation is only to be found in the Commune.

The Parisians, however, desirous as they are of a change, and eager as they are for vigour, know that the Commune means the reign of Blanqui, Delescluze, Pyat, and their friends, and that at the best it would be but falling from routine incapacity into ferocious imbecility. They tore down the red placards therefore yesterday, and this morning Trochu answered them in a short but turgid proclamation, wherein he declares that "the Governor of "Paris will not capitulate." So far he is in accord with public opinion; but he is expected to do more than that, and with the excellent materials he has now in hand he ought to do more. He takes too long to make up his mind. Instead of annoying the Prussians by incessant sorties in various directions, he makes an average of one a month, announced long beforehand with much flourishing of

trumpets, gets beaten, and then comes in again, till the enemy has had time to recover, and to make fresh preparations. Thus he loses all the advantage of being in the interior of the circle, and only worries and demoralises his troops instead of utilising them.

CHAPTER XXX.

BOULOGNE OUTPOSTS.

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BOULOGNE, *near* PARIS, *Jan.* 8.

THIS morning at break of day I started for twenty-four hours at these outposts with the Tirailleurs de la Seine, a very special and exclusive company of Franc-tireurs, composed, as I have had the pleasure of discovering, of most amiable and well-bred gentlemen. Through the greater part of the night the bombardment had continued, and when the little company assembled at the Porte de la Muette, the shells were hissing into and exploding in Auteuil, on our left, at the rate of about one a minute, while the bastions of the ramparts and the Mont Valérien were answering somewhat leisurely. It was a splendid winter's day, and a bright sun flashed and sparkled on the frozen road and lit up the trees of the Bois de Boulogne, through which we took our way. Some wood has already been cut for the wants of Paris, but there is scarcely any impression made upon the general aspect of the Bois, which has up to this time lost little more than a fringe along the ramparts. The lakes were frozen, and looked dark and inviting; but, alas! there has been no amusement this year, and the ice was still glassy and uncut by the skate. The bright sun only made the scene look more desolate; but if we had been able to forget the siege we should have been reminded of it by the shells which were incessantly hissing over our heads, and sometimes exploding in the air. At the gate

which leads into the little town of Boulogne we came upon a group of peasants huddled up behind a wall, who, as usual, told frightful tales of shells which had fallen "just there," within the last five minutes. Shells there had fallen, indeed, and balls too, for many of the houses showed the little white marks made by the bullet, while the church steeple was pierced with a large ragged hole evidently made by other than masonic hands. When I was last in Boulogne there were still people to be seen in the streets, but to-day they are utterly deserted—mere blank white deserts, plastered with signs and notices that are a pure mockery and delusion.

Turning somewhat to the right, under the shelter of the houses (for the Prussians have taken an ugly knack of shelling from the opposite heights of late), we reached a little house by the side of the Seine, in which the post is usually lodged. It appeared, however, that two shells had already gone through it this morning, and as they had made it uncomfortable as well as dangerous, a decision was at once taken to seek other and better head-quarters. Off we went, therefore, keeping the houses between us and the Prussians on the opposite bank of the river, where there were houses, and running sharply across the open where there were none. A last run took us across the Rond Point, and there we found a house which seemed appropriate, and the door of which, like all the other doors in Boulogne, was open; or, to speak more correctly, had been opened. In a minute the company was over the place, each one seeking a convenient room in which to install himself for the intervals of mounting the guard. It fell to my lot to occupy a charming apartment on the first floor with four Tirailleurs, whom I ask permission shortly to describe, in order to show what kind of men some, at least, of those Franc-tireurs are whom the Prussians assume to hang as outlawed

murderers and robbers. M. de Bellecour, M. Tissot, and M. Maurice Simon are distinguished artists, whose names are all known in England, while the fourth, M. d'Hurcourt, is a boy only seventeen years old, who, against the will at first, but finally with the consent of his family, has taken service, and who is always foremost in every desperate affair. Thus three days ago he went out with thirty others in the night to the plateau d'Avron, where the Prussians have now established outposts. The men managed, by crawling on all-fours, silently to pass through the line of the Prussian sentries, but after wandering about some time and discerning nothing, the order was whispered to retreat. "Le petit," as d'Hurcourt is called, while crawling back suddenly came upon a Prussian sentry fast asleep with his gun between his knees. A low whistle brought a sergeant, who seized the sentry by the throat, and dragged him off a prisoner, though not without producing sufficient noise to rouse the whole line, and to bring about a general discharge, which sent the little reconnaissance running back at the *pas de course* into Rosny, of course with their prisoner, who is now safely lodged with his fellows in like case.

To return, however, to the *corps de garde* of the Tirailleurs. The first thing after lodging was fire, and we all dispersed in search of wood, which we soon brought back in the shape of loose railings, and even of doors and shutters, for it does not do to be too particular. A table and chairs were also found, and transported into the apartment, and then we produced our provisions, preserved beef, horse, antelope, and saucisson, which made us a very excellent and extremely gay breakfast. When that had been duly honoured we sallied forth to go into the *tranchée*, which we reached by a tortuous but sheltered route through deserted houses and over gardens trodden out of all resem-

blance to their former selves. In front of us were the steep heights of St. Cloud, rising abruptly from the other side of the river, and on our right the houses which line the slip of road leading from the Rond Point to the bridge. They were bespattered here and there with bullet marks, and one of them had just been completely traversed by a shell.

Curious to see the effect it had produced we sought to open the door, but for once it was closed, and hearing us an old man came out, much to our surprise, and asked us what we wanted. As he held the door ajar a woman followed him, crying bitterly, and implored us to go away. "Nous mourons de peur, messieurs," said she, through her sobs; "comment pouvez-vous vous promener "comme ça? Ah mon Dieu!" and she suddenly retreated as a shell hissed rather nearer than usual. The man was very cheery, however, as indeed was also his daughter, a bright-eyed lassie of eighteen, who smiled as though she was rather pleased than otherwise to be under bombardment, and he readily allowed us to go up to the first floor, where the shell had passed. It had come in at a window and had gone clean through two strong timber partitions, tearing in them holes big enough for a man to walk through, fringed with long white splinters, and covering the floor with stones and plaster, falling finally in the street through a third hole. The old man and his family, who must be pretty courageous to have stayed here in charge of their master's house when all else have left, were luckily all on the ground floor when the missile arrived, and there, after an unsuccessful attempt to calm the fears of the wife, we left them, determined, frightened as they were, to stick to their post. "Que voulez-vous?" said the old man; "if I "went away the marauders would plunder the house." As there did not seem to be anything left in it, I thought his

remark lacked force, but it showed only the greater courage and sense of duty.

The *tranchée* is simply a covered way constructed along the bank of the Seine, from the bridge of St. Cloud to the bridge of Sèvres. The river is lined with charming little country houses, broken here and there by a farm or a timber-yard; and the *tranchée*, following the walls and the natural shelter where there is any, and dug deep into the earth where there is none, is most picturesque. The only one feature it preserves throughout is that of intense muddiness, mitigated in a slight degree by boards, along which we skated rather than walked, crouching below the parapet to keep out of sight of the Prussians, who were probably doing precisely the same thing on the opposite bank. The trench winds about in a most tortuous way, through stables and gaps in walls, round and under summer-houses, and then again through the open. The parapet is made of every conceivable material—of earth, sandbags, stones, broken furniture, and even in one place of dung; but for a great part it has been built up in layers of thick timber planks, which were found here ready to hand. At intervals shelters have been made in favourable positions, and very comfortable and very safe they are—much better in every respect than the houses, which are most of them covered with white bullet marks, and some of them pierced by shell. The Mobiles of the Aube furnished to-day the greater number of the sentries, and they were peering cautiously through the loop-holes, and although it was forbidden to fire, the Prussians kept running so temptingly up the open street in St. Cloud that a Mobile suddenly discharged his chassepot and hit his man, who was at once carried off by two others—an incident which procured us a harmless return ball from the church tower.

All this time the bombardment was of course going on,

and what with the Prussian batteries on the other side and the replies from the ramparts, there was one constant stream of shells overhead. As we approached the Pont de Sèvres we came right opposite to the Prussian batteries, which are established in two tiers just above the Château de Bréteuil, and below the Lanterne de Diogène. We could not only see the embrasures and the artillerymen at work, running to and fro, but we were so near that we could actually hear their cries. One circumstance worthy of record, as showing the extent to which they carry their precautions, is that every time the Mont Valérien or the ramparts of Paris fired a shout was raised, upon which all the men instantly fell down out of sight till the shell had reached and exploded. It was extremely interesting to watch the results of the fire. The Prussian batteries are established in the midst of the tall trees of the park, upon a little plateau, and it was only two nights ago that they unmasked them by cutting down a few of the trees in front. They are to a great extent still screened from the Mont Valérien, and, as might be expected, the shells from that fort fall generally pretty wide of the mark. Not so, however, those from the ramparts, whence the batteries can be distinctly seen. Some of them, indeed, exploded in the air over our heads, and others being aimed short fell unpleasantly near us, but the greater number were very near the batteries. At five minutes to four one fell exactly in the embrasure where the heaviest gun was placed, and with the smoke of the explosion there arose a large sheet of flame, showing that it had lighted upon ammunition. The flame seemed to cover the whole battery, and remained burning for about half a minute, after which the battery was reduced to utter silence. The action was, however, taken up by lighter guns somewhat farther to the left, but at a quarter past four another well-directed shell fell in

that, and probably dismounted a piece, for the firing slackened at once, and was only faintly continued till dark.

I walked on now to the Pont de Sèvres, which, with its one broken arch, looks still very solid and easily repairable. Across the broad road leading to it from Paris, the *tranchée* runs behind a barricade formed of the most varied materials, including the wheels and part of the body of an omnibus, and a large collection of green *persiennes*. By the side of the road is what was once a café, but which is now known as the "Maison du Parliamentaire," from the fact that most of the official flags of truce are hoisted there. It is literally riddled with shells, and the side facing the Prussians looks more like an immense sieve than a wall. By the way, there was some rather sharp practice here on the occasion of the last parley, for before the officers had time to leave the house the Prussians had hauled down their flag of truce and sent a shower of shells into them, killing and wounding several men. Thence we returned by the trench to dinner at our little house, and my companions are now stretched comfortably on the floor, with their feet to the fire, awaiting their turn to go on guard. As I write, the fire has begun again heavily, and I begin to think from the sound that the Prussians are paying us personally some attention.

Jan. 9, 6 *a.m.*

I confess I think it a very disagreeable thing to be shelled out of one's sleep, especially when that sleep has to be taken on hard boards, which discover all kinds of new and uncomfortable angles in one's frame. That, however, is what we have been exposed to during the night. Whether the Prussians detected our smoke (I myself strongly declared against fires) in the moonlight, or from whatever other cause, certain it is that they have been

most unamiably throwing their horrid shells at us through the night. Some of them have gone into houses on the other side of the Rond Point, immediately opposite to us; but none fortunately have entered ours. Nevertheless, I confess that they have spoilt my sleep. It is a very nasty thing just as one is dropping off into slumber to be reminded by a hiss and an explosion, which seems to have taken place in the next room, that one may possibly wake up in two pieces; and I am not sorry to know that we start in half an hour for Paris.

PARIS, *Jan.* 9, 10 *p.m.*

There is real good news this morning. Faidherbe has won a battle on the 3rd at Bapaume, and Garibaldi another at Nuits, while Chanzy still holds good at or near Le Mans, and with Bourbaki is preparing to move on Paris. Fortune has perhaps at last turned, and none too soon either, for we had almost begun to despair of the provinces, and the rumours of successes which have been afloat for the last week have been received with despairing incredulity. This news may explain the rage which has induced the Prussians at last to bombard Paris since the 5th, and seems to make good my own surmise that events had occurred which made it necessary for them to lose no time in coming to extremities.

Since the 5th Paris, or at any rate that portion of Paris which sleeps through a gentle but almost uninterrupted concert of big guns, has been awoke every morning at daylight by the serious renewal of the Prussian bombardment. The Parisians, however, are easily *blasés*, and they are already beginning to cease taking an active interest in the shells they receive. The single outward sign of bombardment that they have shown has been to assemble in crowds, in order to run after the exploded *obus;* but yesterday the crowds were already lesser, and things had pretty well

assumed their accustomed aspect. The Prussians, nevertheless, were hard at work all day, doing their best to kill and wound the women, children, and citizens of the capital; and although the results did not bear any respectable proportion to their efforts,. they had some brilliant successes, which may be worthily inscribed on their colours. The houses of Auteuil, Vaugirard, the railway viaduct at the Point du Jour, and the river Seine were the greatest sufferers, but a babe was killed at its mother's breast, and a beautiful girl of seventeen mortally wounded while walking with her father on the Versailles road. Probably there were a dozen disasters of this kind in Paris, but the forts, although they receive a fair share—more than one-half—of the fire, suffer very little. In Issy, for example, there have been but two killed and eighteen wounded during the last three days. The Prussians must guess that they are making more noise than mischief, which renders it all the more probable that they have some as yet unfathomed object in keeping up this absurd but unpleasant rain of shells.

It is strange that, with all his acuteness, M. de Bismarck should have so entirely failed up to this time in his estimate of the Parisian character, and in all his expectations based upon those estimates. He counted upon sedition, and there has been none; he reckoned certainly upon famine, but famine is not yet near; and now, when he resorts to a sudden bombardment as an unfailing means of demoralisation, the people are so far from being frightened that the mayors have been forced to post up notices begging them "not to assemble in crowds at the spots "where shells are falling!" Possibly the Prussian generals may now have fallen back upon the plan of making a regular siege of one or more of the forts, and may even now be constructing their approaches, under cover of the

bombardment, against Vanves or Rosny, but this will be a very difficult process for detached forts protected on either side by others. Unfortunately the French never use their advantages or discover their weaknesses till too late.

Jan. 11.

People who try to escape the trouble of thinking out a given situation by taking refuge in proverbs sometimes meet appeals to activity by this phrase—"Tout vient à point "à qui sait attendre." I always feel inclined to cap the proverb by another—"Tout échappe à qui trop attend." I fear the latter is very applicable to the great General Trochu, who is privately nicknamed the advocate of "la "désistance à outrance," and whose one object seems to be to avoid doing anything until it is too late, and then to give up when he has half done it. Champigny, where one precious day was lost over the bridge and another over nothing at all, and Le Bourget, which was once easily taken and then positively given away to the Prussians, apparently only in order to be unsuccessfully attacked again when they had had the time to strengthen the position, are instances among many which I could cite; and now that the Prussian batteries have opened, and that everybody can see where they are placed, General Trochu has at last begun to send out reconnaissances to them. Probably when the regular approaches are opened he will begin to endeavour to prevent their construction. These reconnaissances, however, have had the effect of worrying the Prussians, who in the last two nights have lost sixty-four prisoners through them, while the garrison is proportionately encouraged.

Meantime the bombardment of Paris continues with increased severity. All last night there was a perfect *feu d'enfer*, and as I write I hear the shells exploding on the other side of the Seine at the rate of eight or ten a minute.

They do a good deal of damage to houses, but comparatively little to human beings, and, strangely enough, it is the purely inoffensive part of the population—the women, children, and wounded—who have suffered most. Perhaps those who happen to be living in a bombarded city are unnecessarily touchy, but I confess it seems to me a monstrous thing to shell women and children (not to mention foreign ambassadors) without any kind of notice. The Luxembourg, the Invalides, and the Ambulance of the Val de Grâce appear to be the chief points aimed at, for the greater part of the shells fall about them. As the Geneva flag does not protect ambulances from Prussian shelling, General Trochu has taken away all the French wounded from the Val de Grâce and filled it with Prussians, who can hardly complain if they suffer from the barbarity of their own comrades. I think I showed conclusively in a recent letter that the bombardment of the city cannot arise from involuntary errors in the firing, and the longer the bombardment continues the more clear it becomes that the Prussians are shelling the inhabitants, and not the forts or the ramparts. This morning, for instance, some of their projectiles have fallen within 300 yards of the Seine, and others in the Ile St. Louis, behind Notre Dame. I imagine nobody will believe that these were aimed either at the ramparts, which are 5600 yards, or at the forts, which are 7700 yards, nearer to the Prussian batteries.

This morning's *Officiel* contains extracts from German newspapers, which serve to show that the Prussians are now at last beginning to be very uneasy about their situation in France. They may indeed well be so; for if Bourbaki can but establish himself on their line of retreat, there are evil times in store for them.

Jan. 12.

The pious and humane William has now continued for

seven days and nights his valiant efforts against the ferocious old men, women, and children of Paris, and "by the help of Providence" has sent a considerable number of them to their last account. A bloodthirsty old lady of fifty, who, in defiance of the laws of war, made a sortie from her house into the Rue de Vaugirard, was successfully repulsed by the brave Prussian artillerymen, by a shell which cut her in two. Three wounded soldiers in the Hotel de la Pitié, and four others in the hospital of the Val de Grâce, who had so far violated civilised usages as not to die at once of their wounds, were shelled with great precision and blown to pieces in their beds, as well as one of the nurses who was interfering with the designs of Providence by attending upon them. Five little children, of ages varying from five to thirteen years, who as a reserve force were capable of being used against Prussia in a future war, were made the object of a "material guarantee" by being equally killed in their beds. "By the blessing of Heaven" a large number of losses of the same kind have been inflicted on the population of Paris, and at this moment the valiant and undaunted Prussians are adding to their laurels by continuing the bombardment.

"Oh, but," they will say, possibly, "it is all a mistake. "We were aiming at the forts, or at the ramparts. You "surely don't imagine we were bombarding the city." Well, for those who choose to believe that the famous Prussian marksmen are unskilful enough to throw half their shells exactly double and treble the distance they are intended to fall, that excuse may do. It won't do for me, for I know that when they mean to hit a mark they come only too near it, and that their shells have never fallen above a few yards beyond an object except when Paris is behind it. They are truly a nice and pleasant set of savages, and their good fortune hitherto leads me impiously to doubt

whether Providence has quite as much to do with war as the psalm-singing William pretends. Strangely enough, however, the Parisians don't seem to care much for his shells. They go in crowds to see them fall, and run to pick up the pieces with great glee—not without some respect, either, for they mostly fall on their stomachs when one comes within fair distance of them, and if you want to get a certain rise, you have only to wait in a muddy spot the passage of a respectable middle-aged gentleman in a white waistcoat, and then to cry suddenly, "Gare l'obus!" The result is certain to amuse you much more than the old gentleman.

Yesterday evening the fire slackened as usual with dusk, but, contrary to the usual course of things, it did not open again at ten o'clock, and the night has passed almost without a shot being fired into us, while this morning, too, everything is quiet. It is astonishing to note how little damage has been done by the shells. The Rue Monge is badly knocked about, but in other parts of the city a rare gap in the walls of the houses, a balcony hanging down, a cornice raggedly chipped off, or a hole in the pavement, alone represent the result of the Prussian efforts. There have been no serious fires either, for which we may thank M. Haussman's solid structures of stone and iron. In all there have been, I am told, not more than thirty, and those have been so slight that they have been put out without any trouble, all except one, which burnt out a *chantier* full of wood before it could be mastered, but did no other harm. The Parisians, who found encouragement in the beginning of the bombardment—since they argued it showed impatience on the part of the enemy—find also encouragement in its cessation, which they conclude indicates either a want of ammunition, and therefore an unsatisfactory state of the line of communication, or even, perhaps, the too near

approach of a relieving army. I am inclined to doubt both these explanations, but at present I find no other to hand.

After a long interval of slumber the suspicions of treason in which the French, and especially the Parisians, love to indulge have revived, and this time they are directed at nothing less than the generals-in-chief and their *entourage*. I have had it whispered to me for the last week that two of Trochu's aides-de-camp were giving information to the Prussians, and yesterday the *Siècle* took a higher flight, and declared that either Schmitz, Ducrot, or Vinoy is a traitor. This morning General Trochu has issued a proclamation, in which he declares that these accusations arise from a *trame abominable*, and that its authors are about to be handed over to justice. I remark that in this proclamation, which is signed by himself alone, he assumes to speak not only in the name of but *as* the Government. "Le Gouvernement déclare ici" is a phrase which should only be used by the whole Government, and not by a single member of it. This assumption of dictatorship is not novel, but that only makes it look the more dangerous.

It is understood that Jules Favre has been invited to attend the London Conference on the Black Sea question. The greater part of the press advise an acceptance of the invitation, since it must involve a recognition of the Republic.

One of the most amusing of all the strange sets of people here are the correspondents of the English newspapers. The *Daily News*, especially, has shown great qualities. From a commanding bed-room in the Grand Hôtel he views with unmoved courage all the fighting that takes place, and being thus always on the spot, is able to recount with every detail the incidents that occur at a distance of not more than

seven or eight miles off. From another commanding chamber, which under certain circumstances might be almost under fire, the *Pall Mall Gazette* philosophises over principles of Government, mutton cutlets, and the abuse of the Geneva Cross; while the *Standard* is understood to have enrolled himself in the Sapeurs Pompiers, and to hold himself ready to put out fires at all hours of the day and night. Meantime, the *Daily Telegraphs* have become invisible, though I saw one of them at the attack on La Bourget, with an ambulance card stuck in his hat, precisely as if he were backing in Imperial favour in the *enceinte du pesage* at a race meeting. It is the *Times*, however, who chiefly excites my admiration and envy. He rides about—insecurely on a horse, or securely in a brougham—covered with Geneva Crosses, and in a gorgeous uniform, with a violet velvet collar, and a képi covered with gold lace and embroidery. I thought he was a field-marshal, at least, when first I saw this splendour; but I find that he is—orderly officer to the Bishop of Sumatra. Fancy the *Times* riding about after a converted bishop! What *would* Rothschild say?

Among the horrors of the siege, I may say that I breakfasted this morning off a splendid haricot of mutton and Gruyère cheese, and that we have resumed playing *baccarat* at the club. I wish we hadn't.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONTINUED BOMBARDMENT.

Jan. 14.

I HAVE mentioned that an invitation to M. Jules Favre to attend the Black Sea Conference had been received by the Government, and yesterday there was published a long circular embodying the reply which has been made to that invitation. Lord Granville's despatch was written on the 29th December; but, faithful to his usual sharp practice, M. de Bismarck only sent it in on the 10th January, the very day on which M. Jules Favre was invited to appear in London, and then did not send with it the *sauf-conduit* which had been promised. He excuses himself for this by saying that, in consequence of a flag of truce having been fired upon on the 23rd December, the Prussian General-in-Chief has felt it necessary to interrupt all further communication by flags of truce. The cool audacity of this assertion will be appreciable from the very fact that it was brought to the knowledge of the Government by a flag of truce, and that one is sent regularly every week by the Prussians themselves with Mr. Washburn's despatches. Moreover, when this very communication was sent by the Pont de Sèvres, the Prussian batteries behind it never ceased their firing into Paris, but, on the contrary, redoubled it, although their own flag of truce was flying below them, and although the French batteries remained —as both sides were bound to do—entirely silent during

the parley. This is a much more serious and less excusable violation of the laws of war than the firing of a single bullet by an unintelligent sentry, and it is the second time it has occurred.

To come to the circular, however. M. Jules Favre at once accepts, and for the present declines, the invitation to the Conference; but he manages to reconcile the two decisions in a way which is not calculated to inspire confidence in his statesmanship. After giving the best and most conclusive reasons for going to London, he seriously declares that he holds it necessary to stay in Paris because Paris is being bombarded. It is hardly to be supposed that his presence here is of the slightest use in mitigating the effects of exploding shells. I believe, however, that his colleagues are by no means disposed to let him go if they can help it. They feel perhaps that evil times may be coming, that they may even be close at hand, and they do not like the idea of being left in the lurch with General Trochu. At any rate, I can tell you that most of them are strongly opposed to the departure of the Foreign Minister in the present conjuncture, and perhaps the reservation with regard to the bombardment has been invented as an ingenious compromise which at any rate gains a little time, and which might be expected to commend itself to the Parisians. The press here writes such nonsense on all subjects that it is hardly worth while to pay any attention to it; nevertheless, those journals which by comparison with the rest are most sensible agree in thinking that a clear decision one way or the other ought to have been taken, and that that decision ought to have been to go to London at once. That indeed seems to be manifest, for it must of necessity involve the recognition of the Provisional Government as a Provisional Government, and would very possibly afford an opportunity of

gaining the active intervention of the European Powers in favour of France. There may be reasons on the other side which cannot be appreciated without further acquaintance with the conditions by which the Conference may be surrounded; but it is too much like a lawyer and too little like a statesman to place the question, as M. Favre does, on the ground of personal sentiment rather than on that of national interests.

The bombardment continues, rather less fiercely, but still with results which will be satisfactory to the humane William and his generals. Some dozen or two of wounded men, of women, and of children have been blown to pieces, and a considerable number of public and private buildings are damaged daily by Prussian shells on the left bank of the Seine. The forts and ramparts, however, are scarcely scratched, and are in just as good condition as they were before the bombardment began, while all around them new batteries have arisen as if by enchantment. There is little fighting going on at closer range except in the night-time, when reconnaissances are made, which always brings in prisoners and often information. I rode out yesterday to Rueil, which is still the extreme French outpost beyond Mont Valérien, and breakfasted there very quietly within a couple of hundred yards of the Prussians. The redoubts of the Maison du Gibet and of the Maison Brûlée, however, were gently throwing a few shells over our heads into Bougival, where the Prussians have been at work lately; but the only gunshots I heard were those of a number of desperate sportsmen come out to stalk the unwary sparrow. I went into the upper story of the Mairie of Rueil, to take a look over the country, but there was nothing to be seen outside beyond snow and trees. The interior of the apartment, which is used as a store-room, was, however, amusing. It contained a deal of lumber and rubbish, among

other things a bust of Louis Philippe and two Imperial eagles, all in good preservation, and ready to be used again if necessary, and besides a collection of *pompier* accoutrements and a heap of military overcoats, Prussian, Mobile, and line, torn, dirty, and clotted with blood, all lying together amicably as their owners lie in the burying-ground below. Not a bad epitome, I thought, of the political and military situation.

The supply of food in Paris continues to be a perpetual surprise. We really seem to be better off than ever, and I remark that preserved beef, chicken, and veal are beginning to reappear in the windows of the *charcutiers*. Bread, indeed, has undergone a change, not in quantity but in quality, for the bakers are forbidden to make it white, which involves waste, and consequently it is now all of a dirty brown colour, not pleasing to the eye. This bread, however, is most delicious to eat; one tastes the corn in it, and it is to be hoped that it will not cease to be made with the end of the siege. By the way, the organisation for distributing flour to the bakers is very defective, and it broke down again yesterday in some parts of the town, as it had already done a month ago, so that in some bakers' shops there was no bread at all. This naturally caused great discontent, which is all the more excusable because there is no lack of wheat, but only lack of management in its distribution.

Jan. 17.

The savage bombardment which the Prussians have directed against the women, children, and wounded in Paris has now lasted for twelve days and nights without cessation, though with considerable variations in intensity. Thus on the night of the 8th they threw close upon 900 shells into the city, while last night the number did not exceed 189. The average is 350 every night and 150

every day, and it is very close to the mark to say that they have already fired into the harmless and defenceless population as many as 6000 of their projectiles. The following is a *résumé* of the official report upon the result in Paris itself of this expenditure of ammunition : —

Date.	Children Killed.	Women Killed.	Children Wounded.	Women Wounded.	Men Killed.	Men Wounded.	Women and Children Killed and Wounded.	Men Killed and Wounded.	Totals.
Jan. 5 and 6	1	1	—	3	3	2	5	5	10
„ 6 and 7	—	1	—	6	3	—	7	3	10
„ 7 and 8	—	2	3	2	—	8	7	8	15
„ 8 and 9	8	4	6	9	10	22	27	32	59
„ 9 and 10	7	3	9	9	2	18	28	20	48
„ 10 and 11	—	1	1	8	—	11	10	11	21
„ 11 and 12	—	—	2	5	3	3	7	6	13
„ 12 and 13	—	1	1	8	—	11	10	11	21
„ 13 and 14	2	1	2	7	6	15	12	21	33
„ 14 and 15	4	1	2	6	9	9	13	18	31
„ 15 and 16	1	1	2	7	4	6	11	10	21
„ 16 and 17	—	—	—	4	1	9	4	10	14
Totals ...	23	16	28	74	41	114	141	155	296

Assuming that 6000 shells have been thrown into the town, these results show, as may be verified by a simple calculation, that only one shell in twenty hits anybody and only one in seventy-five kills, which, considering that the Prussians are firing into the thick of the most populous quarters, is a comparatively small harvest of blood to reap out of so much iron and saltpetre. One-half of the victims are women and children—innocent and helpless creatures, whose only fault is that they enter into Prussian

calculations as a means whereby the defenders of the capital may be worked upon. Probably the most simple readers of Prussian manifestoes and correspondence have now learned to estimate the true character of these "mild "Germans." Their system of warfare is based throughout upon terrorism exercised upon those who cannot defend themselves, in order to awe those who can—precisely the same system, in fact, that is pursued by brigands of all countries. They fight, indeed, when they cannot help it, but when they can they prefer to take hostages and levy "requisitions" upon civilians; and now that they have met in Paris a force capable of resistance, they do not scruple, in utter disregard of those laws and usages of civilised warfare which they so often cite, to take their revenge upon the women and children. There is something inexpressibly base and cowardly in this conduct.

Two days ago I saw a terrible spectacle.. A little child, who could scarcely have been more than five years old, had been killed by a shell while playing in the street. His arm was entirely taken off, and one side of his face was carried away, while his fair curly locks were dabbled with blood and brains, and his blue pinafore was saturated with gore. They had just picked him up when I arrived, and were carrying him tenderly in, his little feet hanging piteously down. "Grand Dieu! what will his poor mother "become?" said a woman close by. The men were even more moved, and swore they would take terrible vengeance one day. This indeed is the only moral effect of the bombardment—to make the Parisians more savage and determined than they have ever been. It has entirely failed to terrify them, and the quarters which are chiefly exposed are still filled with crowds, who go out "to see the "shells fall," while at every spot where one has already fallen it has become necessary to place a National Guard,

who makes the crowd pass regularly before the breach, repeating "Circulez, messieurs," exactly as is done with any other object of interest. As a subject of conversation, indeed, the bombardment has taken the place of the weather, and instead of remarks upon rain and sunshine, the small talk of Paris is made up of accounts of last night's and the morning's shells, intermingled with calculations and measurements on the map to discover what streets may still be considered out of range. The southern side of the Seine has hitherto borne the brunt of the bombardment, and will probably continue to do so; for although two shells have fallen on the northern side near the Hôtel de Ville, the Prussian cannon cannot seriously injure it from their present positions. The Madeleine, for instance, is 8500 metres from their nearest battery, and up to this time they have never exceeded the range of 7000 metres, and have attained it but very rarely. The safest spot in Paris at this moment is probably the Place du Château d'Eau, which lies almost in the centre of the circle of Prussian batteries, but there is a very large space in which there is practically no danger, and, if need be, the whole population could be lodged in that space.

M. de Bismarck said some months ago, "We shall take one or two of your forts whenever we please"; but after fourteen days' furious bombardment of Vanves, Issy, and Montrouge, which are the most exposed, they are no nearer entering any one of them than they were at the beginning, nor have they advanced one yard towards them. From all I have seen and know I am convinced that they cannot take one fort, if it be but fairly defended, under a loss of 10,000 men. Maps of Paris will help but little in appreciating the chances of the result, for the forts themselves do not now represent one-half of the defensive works between the Prussians and the ramparts, and if they were esta-

blished in Issy (which seems to be the object of their particular desire) to-morrow, they would be much less advantaged by it than they suspect. Up to this time they have done little damage that has not easily been repaired. They have, indeed, nearly reduced the barracks (tall houses in the middle of the forts, and excellent marks) to ruins, but that of course is of no importance whatever, for the troops are all safely installed in the casemates. I am amused to see, by the extracts from German papers, that they claim to have "silenced" Issy and Vanves on the first day of the bombardment. By this time they must have recovered from that little delusion; for as I write both Vanves and Issy are throwing even more shells than they receive, while a dull explosion about every ten seconds shows that the Prussians are engaged in silencing women and children much more than forts.

I notice, too, that they are already announcing what they mean to do in Paris when they have taken it. There is, however, a French proverb which warns us against selling the skin of the bear till we have killed him; and I do not believe they will ever take Paris unless it be through the failure of food.

Food, however, really seems to become, if not more plentiful, more accessible every day, and the provision-mongers continue to display a show of preserved meats, and even of live fowls and game, to which we have been little accustomed during the last three months. Moreover, that delightful and long-regretted root, the potato, has suddenly been brought to light again by a most extraordinary and unforeseen measure—nothing less, in fact, than the taking off of the universal requisition which had been extended to it. The decree to that effect only appeared this morning, and already it is possible to obtain potatoes freely—at high prices, indeed, but still to obtain them. This is a striking

proof of the vice of the system hitherto pursued, and I trust the Government will ponder it. I am convinced that if they were to shake off all their artificial trammels of requisitions and rations, and were to leave things to take their own course, and provisions to reach their natural prices, we should have no more trouble in this respect. It would cost more indeed in the first instance to feed the large mass of people who depend upon the Government, but far less in the end, and they would be fed certainly and regularly, which at present they cannot be, since the slightest hitch in the machinery leaves them without bread altogether—a miserable result which has already been reached upon two or three occasions. They still seem inclined, however, to persevere in their old ways in spite of the potato confession. Thus a second universal requisition of wheat, barley, oats, and rice has appeared, and it is manifest that bread will be rationed in a few days. Indeed, it is already rationed in some arrondissements, notably in that wherein I reside—which is one reason why I always dine in another, and thus defeat the scheme. The bread of Paris, by the way, has become a very strange and dirty-looking compound, made of a mixture of wheat, oats, barley, and rice. Most people regret the snowy *petit pain* of better times, but to my taste the new bread is excellent, which is lucky for me, as I am obliged to eat a great deal of it to make up for the want of other things.

Jan. 18.

There is a rumour to-day that Bourbaki has won a battle at Lures, near Belfort. I give it because it comes from, and is believed by, a person of important position; but a sad experience forces me utterly to reject it until it receives full confirmation. There is no doubt that the best chance of Paris now lies in the hands of Bourbaki. If he can succeed in his movement intended to cut the Prussian line

of communication—or, rather, if he *has* succeeded, for if not he will probably fail altogether—the army around Paris will be in an extremely dangerous position, and it is difficult to see how it can avoid raising the siege. If not, there remain but Faidherbe and Chanzy, neither of whom are now likely to be able to afford efficacious succour to the capital. The great scheme proposed to be carried out by Bourbaki embraces also a series of active operations by the French fleet in the Baltic, which is not, indeed, favourable for naval operations, but which yet offers one point where they may, if the weather serves, be carried out. There will be great difficulties in getting a competent fleet under weigh.

M. Jules Favre is still here, for the very good reason that he is still without the *sauf-conduit* which the Prussian Minister engaged to place at his disposal. The bombardment, moreover, being still continued may be held, after his circular, to furnish another reason for staying here. There is, however, a very general opinion that he ought to go to London, while at the same time there is considerable fear that he is not the man to meet the most wily diplomats of Europe round a table, and adequately to defend the interests of France among them. There is also a strong suspicion that the English Government only wants a French Envoy in order to make use of him in throwing over England's treaty obligations, which done, it is said, they would politely show him over the Channel again, "Gros-Jean "comme devant." "England," they say here, "only "desires to shuffle out of her engagements. The experience "of the last two months shows it. She has been slapped "on one cheek by Russia with a circular on the Black Sea, "and immediately turns the other to Prussia to be slapped "harder with a circular on Luxembourg. Even the invio- "lability of English citizens no longer interests you. Your

" flag has been insulted, your vessels seized and sunk, and " your subjects outraged in a manner which under Palmer- " ston would have made every Englishman take his musket, " and you calmly take the insult, and content yourselves " with pocketing the money compensation which Prussia " contemptuously throws to you. What can we hope from " such a nation? What but that you should press us to " aid you in glossing over Russia's aggression upon Europe, " and that you should advise us blandly to submit to " Prussia?" I scarcely know what to answer when this is said, except by recommending that my interlocutors should wait till Parliament meets.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SORTIE OF BUZENVAL.

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Jan. 19.

I HAVE just returned from witnessing the first day's events of a battle which will probably decide the fate of Paris, so far as it depends upon Paris. I have known for some time that it was imminent, and a shrewd suspicion as to the plan adopted led me a few days since to make a visit to Rueil and the surrounding country, to which I have already alluded, in order to take a survey of the ground which I expected would be the scene of action. My expectation has proved well-founded, and I must ask my readers to let me mark off the salient points of the position in order to the better comprehension of the engagement.

The Seine, where it leaves Paris on the south-west side, takes a very exaggerated serpentine course, making a series of long loops. The first loop near Paris encloses a long strip of land some four miles broad lying over the whole north-west side of the capital. Two-thirds of the way down the strip stands the fort Mont Valérien, crowning a hill which I have once before compared to a horseshoe, beginning above Rueil, passing through the fort, and then turning round, over the river, by Montretout, through Buzenval, where it bulges out and rises into the plateau of La Bergeire, and ending at La Celle and La Jonchère. The Rueil and Mont Valérien side of the horseshoe has always been in possession of the French, and at the Rueil end they

A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

have made two advanced batteries, at the Moulin du Gibet and the Maison Brûlée. The latter battery, being at the edge of the spur, commands a view on the right of Rueil and the surrounding plain, in front over the valley to La Jonchère and Bougival on the left, up the valley and across to the château and park of Buzenval, and to Montretout, with La Bergerie rising behind it. In short, it overlooks the whole of any possible action at this point, and it was the spot I had marked for my own, and which I made my head-quarters to-day. I trust this sketch is intelligible —if not, or even if it is, I trust the reader will take a map.

At seven o'clock this morning I rode out of the Porte Maillot, through a series of crowds rather than regiments of National Guards, who scarcely seemed to hold together by any formation at all, and whose dark uniforms were scattered over the broad roadway in a way which made it very difficult to get on at all. Outside the gates, however, matters were even worse, for Neuilly was literally swarming with troops of every arm and uniform, besides which a treble row of ambulance waggons narrowed the way in a long line from the ramparts to the bridge. The troops looked like men going gloomily but steadily to work. They showed little enthusiasm I thought, their drums and trumpets were silent, and even the perpetual chatter and badinage which usually mark the progress of a French regiment were absent, though they were gay and good-humoured enough when spoken to, and as ready as ever to do any little service in their power. After much struggling I managed to get across the bridge and through the last of the barricades, which structures, by the way, are the most terrible obstructions to the movement of troops that can be devised, and produce endless confusion and delay. On the road from Courbevoie to Mont Valérien I

found more National Guards, more Mobiles, and more regulars, nor was I able to disengage myself till I got clear of the houses, when I struck off the road across the fields.

The morning had hitherto been clear, though there was evidently rain in the air; but just before I got round in front of Mont Valérien, at half-past nine o'clock, a thick fog suddenly settled down upon it, which, near as I was, half hid it and everything else from me. A few dropping shots showed that the action had already begun; and as I learnt that Ducrot was late in his movement on the right I took my post for a time on the Montretout side of the fort, in order to see the left go into action. At first a few points of fire alone showed through the mist, but very soon it lifted somewhat, and then I beheld the gallant and stirring sight of troops attacking to the sound of the charge. First a thin scattered line of skirmishers, then long and closer lines advancing rapidly up the hill, and behind the columns of support following them slowly. At the crest of the hill the first-comers slacken and stop, and at once the fusillade opens in two clearly-defined lines of smoke. They waver a little; officers run to and fro behind them, and in a minute they go straight into the wood, while the firing redoubles, and the woods seem to sweat a thick cloud of white smoke. Behind are a few men on the ground, stragglers some of them, others fairly wounded, many indeed dead, but the attack has succeeded or will succeed, for the Prussians have nothing serious to fall back upon in this direction; and now the artillery goes down the hill at a trot, and up the other side at a gallop, to make the thing sure, and above all to cannonade the Prussian batteries at Garches and the plateau of La Bergerie. This plateau is the hard morsel of the day. If it can be swallowed the success is complete. La Jonchère and Bougival must fall, and Versailles will be

in a critical position—if not, the whole thing will have to be begun over again. The Prussians know that, and there is no doubt that they have massed here a formidable artillery, and will defend the position desperately.

Leaving now for a time the left, I rode round to the extreme right down in the plain between Rueil and the river, and meeting on the way Major Hutton, an American officer, and Commandant Favrot, the chief of General Ducrot's staff, I accompanied them to the little squadron of cavalry still named after poor Franchetti, and which had been ordered to reconnoitre on this side. As we went down the hill we saw the plain covered with troops, steadily setting their faces towards the front, while two armour-plated locomotives on the railway were answering the Prussian batteries at Carrières, St. Denis, Chatou, and La Jonchère, which were already pitching shells all over the flat and into Nanterre and Rueil, where, as they rightly supposed, there were troops to suffer from them. We found the Corps Franchetti close to the railway, dismounted, and sheltered by a wall and some houses, and here we, too, dismounted, and while the captain was recounting that he had only seen one Uhlan on the other side the river, but had received many balls, we hastily consumed a modest breakfast, as a pretext for lighting the first of the day's series of cigars.

It was now a little past eleven o'clock, and, the attack on the extreme right being undeveloped, I took my way up the hill again with Major Hutton to my cherished post at the Maison Brûlée. The battery was vigorously shelling La Jonchère and Bougival, but the Prussians were scarcely answering it, reserving almost all their fire for the reserves, which were still slowly winding round Mont Valérien, coming from Courbevoie to the front in single file for greater safety. The fort was almost silent, throwing

only a shell now and then. Meantime, the extreme left, under Vinoy, was fighting around Montretout, and the centre, under Bellemare, was evidently well-established in the wooded heights between that and Garches. The right, however, was still struggling desperately in the park of Buzenval. The whole of the wood was covered with a cloud of smoke, and the fusillade went on increasing in intensity, till at twelve o'clock it was one incessant roll and rattle, heavier than anything I had yet heard around Paris. To stand and listen to a fight thus concealed by a wood is at once exciting and irritating, and in spite of our full approval of the Maison Brûlée as a point of observation, we somehow before long found ourselves going down into the valley towards the disputed park. The valley was full of troops, and dotted here and there with stragglers, who, like Sosie, experience a greater pleasure in preserving than others do in exposing themselves. As we approached the château —a charming little mansion, with those two supreme efforts of French country-houses, a round tower and a lake —there was noticeable among the National Guards lining the walls and the edge of the wood a decided movement rearwards, and the fusillade became fiercer and fiercer as we drew close to it. We rode through two neat little lodges, and found ourselves in the park, which proved an extremely warm spot. The balls began to puff and sing past one in a very unpleasant way, and to cut and rattle among the branches of the trees incessantly. One evergreen had its top cut clean off as I passed it, to the great alarm of three wounded men, by whom it fell as they were sitting under it. They were not the only kind of men behind trees here, as among others I saw several officers of the National Guard, who evidently would have been more in place a little farther in front. I began myself to think of the propriety of a retreat in good order, when an aide-de-camp

galloped up and inquired for General Ducrot. I at once followed him, not without a twinge, as he went straight at the smoke of the fight, but almost immediately the general himself came out of it with his escort. He was there "to "encourage them in front," and though it really seems to be too absurd for a general thus to expose himself, he seems to be determined to do it to the end, and to have an extraordinary good fortune in escaping the very possible consequences. As I left him one of his escort was shot through the thigh, but he immediately went off to the right to encourage some other troops by putting himself in the foremost ranks.

We came back by way of La Fouilleuse, a large rambling farmhouse in the valley, and which, with all its out-houses, was full of wounded. Nobody had appeared to carry them away, and as the solitary surgeon appealed to me, I, with some lingering regret, left the action for a time, rode off to Courbevoie, and sent over a number of ambulance waggons. As usual the arrangements in this respect were detestable; but the ambulance chiefs were very docile, and readily consented to go where I directed them. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I was thus instrumental in abridging by hours the sufferings of some hundreds of poor fellows.

When I returned to the Maison Brûlée it was past two o'clock. Montretout and Buzenval were now so firmly occupied that scarcely a shot was being fired there, but the fusillade was very heavy on the extreme right towards La Jonchère. With dark it fell gradually, however, except that the Prussians made a sudden, but I am told unsuccessful, attack on the left at the last moment, and the French, when I left the field at six o'clock, appeared to occupy Montretout and the château and park of Buzenval, while on the extreme right they are still below La Jonchère. As La Bergerie is still uncaptured, they are,

I fear, no farther advanced than when they started, and the real struggle will begin to-morrow under anything but favourable conditions.

A proclamation, signed by General Le Flô, who takes over the governorship of Paris "during General Trochu's "absence," seems to indicate that Trochu means either to get through or else to shut himself up in Mont Valérien, whence he directed the action to-day. We are evidently near the end, for to-day bread is rationed at the rate of 300 grammes (less than half a pound per person per day), and search is ordered to be made for provisions in all uninhabited apartments.

Jan. 20.

When I left the field of battle at dusk last night the French had not, indeed, taken the only position of importance against which their efforts were directed (*i.e.*, the plateau of La Bergerie), but they appeared to be so firmly established in the secondary positions about it, that I reckoned surely upon a renewal of the attack this morning.

On the left Vinoy occupied the heights and the unfinished Prussian redoubt of Montretout, which had been very gallantly taken by his Mobiles and National Guards, who on this side behaved admirably, and never flinched for a moment. After taking two barricades, the National Guards continued the fight in the streets of St. Cloud, and pushed forward till they were over the church, where, according to orders, they remained, ransacking the houses, and bringing out of them some fifty prisoners, as dirty and miserable-looking objects as ever I beheld, clad in flat caps and long grey coats, and caked all over with the yellow clay of the heights. These prisoners seemed by no means dissatisfied with their fate, and many of them were calmly smoking the pipe of consolation. They had scarcely

defended themselves at all when they saw the bayonets near them; and one of them, an officer, came forward smilingly to the National Guards, and, doffing his cap, said, "Bon jour, messieurs; veuillez nous montrer la route de Paris." By the road at Montretout are two houses, the Maison de Pozzo di Borgo, and farther on the Maison Zimmermann. These were occupied and barricaded; the former by National Guards, and the latter by some 300 Mobiles of the Loire Inférieure, under the command of M. Lareinty, as brave a man as ever lived, and a splendid officer. Attempts were made to bring up the artillery, but the ground was in such a state after the thaw and the subsequent rains that it was absolutely impossible. From ten o'clock in the morning, however, till dark the men remained at their posts, exchanging shots with the Prussian outposts, and listening anxiously to the firing on their right. Next to them in the line of battle was General Bellemare's division, which was launched at the eastern spur of the plateau of La Bergerie and the little town of Garches, where the Prussians had established some formidable batteries. Here the task was more difficult, but still the heights were crowned, first by the Franc-tireurs, and then by the Zouaves and line, and at eleven o'clock the Mobiles and National Guards were in the first houses of Garches, where they remained the whole day fighting backwards and forwards in the village and through the woods. The officers, if they had been worth their salt and capable of leading their men, might, I am convinced, have taken the whole of Garches, batteries and all; but they seemed to lose their heads, and not to know what to do or whither to go, though I am sorry to say a few of them solved the latter question by going "bock again" down into the valley. Their defects were of course not without influence upon the men.

Thus when I arrived on the crest of the hill the fighting was going on heavily, and our first line, composed of Mobiles, was skirmishing in the woods some thirty yards in front. Just then a regiment of National Guards was brought up by an aide-de-camp to support them, and very pretty they looked, coming up the hill at a run, with fixed bayonets, the colonel puffing heavily along in front, and the aide-de-camp brandishing his sabre and cheering them on. When they got a little below me, however, and began to hear the balls singing past their heads, they ducked to a man, with a unanimity that was positively comic, slackened speed, stopped by common consent, and then, falling flat on their stomachs, opened fire to the front on the Mobiles! You may imagine the feelings of the aide-de-camp (and, for the matter of that, mine too, for I was only just on the edge of their flank, and they are dreadful wild shooters). He galloped along the line, shouting to them to cease fire with many strange oaths, and I left him struggling with them, and calling upon them to go into the wood. At this part of the field, however, though Garches was never taken, the positions captured by the first rush were also more or less kept till dusk.

The right, as I have already mentioned in my letter of yesterday, came up two hours (some of it indeed four hours) late; the cause of which, as I now learn, was that the artillery of Ducrot's and Bellemare's divisions, by some mistake, instead of taking two different roads, both took the same, and thus rendered it impassable for the infantry. When the troops did arrive they had a very hard time of it. The château of Buzenval was carried without great difficulty, but in the vast wooded park behind it the fighting was very hot, and the balls flew about in such a way that I am beginning now to wonder how I or anybody else ever came out of it. The Prussians

were strongest here, for the very good reason that the park lies on the upper slope of the plateau of La Bergerie; the farther park wall was indeed lined with them. As I left the place, General Ducrot ordered a squad of sappers to breach this wall, and they set forth at once with their bags of powder; but they never reached the wall, and at the end of the day the French were masters of about two-thirds of the park. The extreme right of all had equally hard work to do, and under worse circumstances; for it was shelled all day long, as it came up through the plain behind Rueil, in Rueil itself (where, by the way, an American ambulance carriage was cut in two by a shell), and in La Malmaison, which, like all the first positions, was taken easily enough. From thence to Buzenval the fight wavered backwards and forwards all day, but when I started thence to return to Paris I left the French masters of Longboyau, and still fusillading in the low ground below the château of La Jonchère, close to Bougival.

As I have already remarked, La Bergerie not being taken, nothing of any importance had really been gained; but even that which had been gained was almost immediately lost again. At dusk the Prussians came up from Versailles against Montretout, and at the same time began to pound it with shell from Garches and La Bergerie. The Mobiles and National Guards gave way, all but Lareinty, who stuck to his house, shut the doors, and declared he would defend himself to the last. It was supposed that he had been taken prisoner; but a few hours ago General Vinoy received intelligence that he was still holding out, and a force is now on its way to his rescue. The right thus thrown back, the centre followed as a matter of course, and after a final struggle, not very fiercely contested, the order was given at two o'clock this morning to evacuate all the positions taken yesterday.

When, therefore, I rode out at daybreak to witness as I imagined the renewal of the fight, I found the French brought back to exactly the same positions that they occupied the day before yesterday, and the Prussians again installed along all the heights from Montretout to La Jonchère. I suspected as much, indeed, as soon as I got out of Paris, for I could scarcely hear a shot, and as I advanced it became clear that the troops were in full retreat. Neuilly was one confused mass of artillery, Mobiles, and National Guards, all setting their faces towards Paris, and trudging painfully along with the air of beaten men. In the gaps between and by the side of the regiments that held together were the stragglers, some of them simply deserters, but many honestly looking for their regiment. This incident of losing his regiment seems to be perpetually recurring to the French soldier, and I am continually addressed by men who seem to think that the first-comer is certain to know that which they ignore themselves. I observed several regiments of the National Guard, whom I had seen yesterday in the front, coming back in very good order, and they seemed to be in better spirits by far than the Mobiles and the regulars—dirty, tired, and hungry as they were. There is, indeed, no want of individual courage and stamina in these shopkeepers and clerks. On the whole, they fought very well yesterday, and if they had but had officers capable of leading them well, there is nothing that might not be done with them; but as it is there is nothing to hold them together, and though they may succeed by force of sheer pluck in a first attack, they must fall to pieces in any sustained effort against regular troops. I am afraid the same fate would befall our own Volunteers, and for the same reason. All along the road from Paris and Nanterre there was one vast stream of returning troops, and as I heard no firing I knew that the

attempt on La Bergerie had been definitively abandoned, and supposed that there must be a suspension of arms. The officer commanding at Nanterre showed me a telegram from General Trochu, ordering him to place a trumpeter at the disposal of Commandant Le Faivre, and that confirmed my guess. When, therefore, I arrived at Rueil, I was not surprised to find it filled with ambulance carriages and *brancardiers*, waiting for the signal to go out to the field. The village was heavily shelled yesterday; so heavily, indeed, that the house in which I breakfasted a few days since received no less than three shells all to itself, but it is very little damaged; nor was there any great loss of life in the village, crowded as its narrow streets were all the day.

I rode down to La Malmaison, which is reoccupied by the Prussians, but was soon stopped by a barricade of trees right across the road, and after another attempt to get out this way I went back and up to the Maison Brûlée. I found it occupied only by a few Breton Mobiles, and presenting in its deserted state a great contrast to the bustle and hurry of the fight yesterday.. So, indeed, did the whole scene, for not a shot was to be heard, and the distant boom of the cannon towards Châtillon alone showed that Paris was still being visited with death and destruction.

I now went down into the valley. The ground, especially near the redoubt, was ploughed in long furrows by the shells, and as I drew over to the other side I occasionally came across a poor fellow lying with his face to the sky. There were very few dead, however; most of them, indeed, must be in the woods on the heights occupied by the Prussians, and I saw no wounded on the field, but the ground was strewn pretty thickly in parts with knapsacks and accoutrements, while here and there

a sabre or a chassepot was to be seen. The ambulances now began to file into the valley from both ends, but they had little work to do, and most of the vans went back empty. I fancy from what I have seen that the French loss cannot be very heavy, while I expect that of the Prussians is very slight, considering the number of men engaged. The French were some 60,000 strong, of whom about 15,000 were engaged, and I should put their loss at not more than 2000 or 2500, though I have heard it put at 3000.

On my return to Paris I found the Avenue de la Grand Armée lined on each side by a dense crowd of people eager for news, and anxious to look upon the returning force—many of them the wives and mothers of the men composing it. They listened sadly in little groups to the complaints of marching, counter-marching, hunger, want of rest, and bad leadership which constitute the staple of the National Guards' account of the affair. As they heard the oft-repeated tale they looked dispirited, but yet not disheartened; and when I stopped I generally heard the conversation closed by the remark, "Well, we must hold out as long as we can "—voilà tout!"

That there should be complaints of the generals and the Government is not a matter for wonder; the wonder is that there are not more of them. The official military reports become more and more incredibly flat and foolish every day, and that of this morning is a positive curiosity, emanating, as it is supposed to do, from a general in his right mind, and knowing more or less what has happened. It is not surprising that General Trochu should furnish us no information of the battle, for his reports never have furnished any information; but it is really astonishing that he should declare to the discouraged Parisians, as he does to-day, that "it is necessary to ask

"for two days' armistice to bring in the wounded and bury "the dead," and should appeal to Paris to furnish all its carriages and horses for that purpose. One would imagine that half the army had been left on the field, whereas the fact is that in four hours all the dead and wounded outside the Prussian lines have been brought in, and that nine out of ten of the ambulances have returned to Paris empty. I am informed, indeed, that not more than 700 dead and wounded have been found in all in the two days; but there are probably nearly double that number left in the woods reoccupied by the Prussians.

There is scarcely any bombardment to-night from the Prussian side, but the forts have been hammering away since yesterday morning at the enemy's batteries. Vanves, especially, opened with all its cannon, which the Prussians appear to believe they had finally disposed of the first day, the fact being that they did indeed dismount exactly one piece in eight, but that they have all been at once remounted. Issy remains nearly silent, but Montrouge, which is garrisoned entirely by sailors, continues to return shot for shot, as it has done from the beginning of the bombardment.

Jan. 21.

The *Journal Officiel* to-day contains a despatch from Gambetta, announcing a defeat of Chanzy with the loss of 10,000 men, and a victory gained by Bourbaki, which if, as seems inevitable, it leads to the raising of the siege of Belfort, is more important than all the rest, and may well console us for the failure before La Bergerie. Food here is not near giving out; indeed, an enormous store of secreted corn has been discovered, which will alone furnish bread for upwards of a week; and I am told, though I do not credit it, that we can, if necessary, hold out for two months longer.

I cannot help thinking, however, that the end is near at hand from many signs, and what that end may be depends, in my opinion, entirely upon Bourbaki and Faidherbe, for it must now be clear to everybody that Paris can never get clear of its own strength. If no relief comes from without, I dread to think of the catastrophe that will ensue; but I look in that case for desperate measures and frightful calamities. The population up to this time has proved staunch and true, and the Government cannot complain of want of support; but if the pinch of hunger really comes there will be troublous times, whether it be under the occupation of Prussian troops or under the rule of the present Government; and I feel sure that the city will never be surrendered till the last rations are reached, and hunger—which for many must mean absolute and hopeless starvation—is inevitable. As for military disasters, the people take them in an admirable spirit, and only seemed nerved by them to greater determination. The prophets of evil said yesterday that there would certainly be disturbances in Belleville to-day, but nothing of the kind has occurred. For the matter of that, I fancy Belleville, since it has found out what real fighting is, has had enough of it. I know that the Flourens Battalion turned to the right-about before it came even under fire on Thursday last, which did not surprise me, for I had seen them do the same thing once before at Créteil.

Jan. 22.

We have had another *journée* to-day, got up by the Bellevilleois, who always turn up after any misfortune. They attempted to gain admittance to the Hôtel de Ville, which seems still to be and to represent the Government of France, and, being refused, fired on the Mobiles who guarded it. The Mobiles returned the fire, and some thirty people were left on the ground, including a number

of spectators who had unwisely remained there. This is the first time that the Bellevilleois have been met as they deserve, and the lesson will no doubt keep them quiet—at any rate, until that general *débâcle* comes which I anticipate at the end of the siege. They will not, however, have long to wait.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CAPITULATION.

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Jan. 25.

On Monday morning I received an extremely grave piece of intelligence. That intelligence, which is already freely whispered about, and has even been darkly alluded to by more than one general, was that the provisions had suddenly been discovered to be very far short of what had hitherto been believed—so much so, indeed, that, with the provincial armies still far off, the Government had been forced to recognise the absolute necessity for negotiation, and that Jules Favre was in consequence about to set forth immediately for Versailles, with the object of gaining an armistice allowing the revictualling of Paris, *and that at any price.* In effect this must amount, of course, to a capitulation under the disguise of an armistice; but, in fact, there is now nothing else to be done, and the greatest proof of judgment that the Government has afforded is the recognition of the truth in time to save the population of Paris from the inevitable starvation that must have followed a too long-deferred solution. It appears that the overtures now made have so far met with an unhoped-for favourable reception, and I am informed that in all probability the Prussians will not insist on entering Paris, at any rate not at once (in which they are wise), but will content themselves with the occupation of two or more of the forts till an Assembly can be brought together to name a regular

Government, with whom Peace can be treated for and concluded. If that arrangement can be carried through it will certainly be a more favourable one than could have been looked for, and M. de Bismarck shows great moderation and judgment in accepting it. Possessed of the forts the Prussian army will in reality possess Paris, while they will avoid the dangers that would arise from an actual occupation of the city; the Parisian vanity will be greatly spared, and by the time that an Assembly is opened they will have time to turn over matters, and be inclined to make the best of the situation. The matter has as yet not been presented, except by half hints and allusions, to the public, but it is much talked of to-day in the well-informed circles, and I find a general feeling of relief that it is all over. It has never been a matter of doubt, except perhaps to the too confiding readers of the Parisian press, that Paris must fall unless succoured by the provinces, and as the provinces have now distinctly failed the sooner the capital surrenders the better. It has made a good defence—that must be admitted by everybody—and it falls, as I have always said it would fall if at all, not to the sword, but to famine. For a city of two millions of souls it is not possible to prolong defence to the traditional "last biscuit and last cartouche," for that would be to condemn half its inhabitants, at least, to a certain death. There is probably not more than eight days' food in the place, or at most eleven, and even as it is I hear that it will require every effort to stave off a calamity.

As regards this matter of food, we have all been deceived, including, as I know, the Government itself; and General Trochu complains, especially, that more exact information was not forthcoming. It is very difficult, however, to be exact with such large numbers, and a mistake of twenty days in a hundred and sixty is, perhaps, pardonable under

the circumstances. What is not pardonable, however, is the utter want of forethought shown by the Government in omitting to add to the store of food while there was yet time. The whole of the victualling of Paris beyond its ordinary stores was done by the Government of the Emperor. When the present Government came into power, it ceased all action in that direction, although that action was then all-important; so that from the 4th to the 17th September, although all the railways were available, not a particle was added by it to the stock of food already in the capital. All this need, however, scarcely be considered now. It seems but too probable that Bourbaki has been defeated, or that he is at least held in check, while it is certain that Faidherbe has been badly beaten, and Chanzy practically destroyed. From the moment these things are known Paris has nothing to do but to capitulate; for, even if there were another month's food in its walls, that would not give time for any possible renewal of serious efforts from the outside. Most people see, therefore, that the end now reached was inevitable; and, once that decided, they naturally enough turn with pleasure to the prospect of renewed intercourse with the world. I have often heard the Mobiles singing, to an air from Offenbach's opera of the "Grand Duchesse"—

"Je donnerais bien un franc cinquante
Pour rentrer dans mes foyers,"

and after four months' reclusion we are all inclined to take up the chorus. The horrible suspense of those—and they are here the great majority—who have a father, a son, or a brother in arms against the enemy, is not to be imagined by those who have not witnessed it. I see every day strong and courageous men moved almost to tears at the thought that those they love have perhaps met a miserable death; and the agony of that thought, prolonged and repeated during

four long months, without the possibility of having it confirmed or brought to nought, is something too terrible. It will be one of my most pleasant reminiscences of the siege, that I have been so fortunate as to be able to relieve the anxiety of more than one father and friend.

Jan. 26.

In spite of the negotiations which are still continuing, though they have not even been alluded to as yet by the *Journal Officiel*, the bombardment of the city continues. The night before last twenty-two persons were hit (of whom four were women and children) either in their houses or in the streets, and last night the shells fell even more thickly, but only three people were hit, one of whom was a poor old widow of sixty-six. This is of a part with the whole history of the bombardment, which has been an act of wanton bloodshed throughout; but it appears that we must not complain, for M. de Bismarck tells us that we must be prepared for anything, since we are rash and wicked enough to be in a city "whence troops go out to attack the German forces," as if the German forces were mere lambs bleating and browsing peaceably outside the walls.

There is a rumour to-day that Gambetta is shut up and surrounded in Lille by the Prussians. The "devouring "activity" of this young man has, it is now evident, done more harm than good to the national defence. He has created armies only to demoralise them, and generals only to get them beaten. It appears that in one day he cashiered 500 officers because they were not "good Republicans," and it was upon his express orders and against their advice that d'Aurelles de Paladine, Chanzy, and Faidherbe sustained the battles that brought disaster upon them. Had there been a man of sound views and judgment capable of keeping him in order, he might have been

made to work wonders; as it is, he has only been capable of throwing up brilliant, but too soon extinguished fireworks. The Government itself, indeed, was an unworking and unworkable collection of makers of and believers in phrases. Poor Trochu has done his best, and has worked night and day to bring good out of it. He deserves, therefore, the gratitude of his country, though he assuredly will not get it; but it has long been evident that he was lamentably unfit for his task; and if the Government had not been prostrated before and blinded by the fine speaking of which he is master, they would have replaced him three months ago, as certain of them wished to do. "Nous ne nous plaignons pas de ce qu'il ait échoué, mais de ce qu'il ait échoué bêtement," is the commentary made upon his leadership; but the responsibility of the *bêtise* falls entirely upon the Government. One thing they have done between them all, which is to kill the Republic of which they are the apostles. Heaven knows what sort of Government will come out of the brains of the Constituent Assembly — they probably won't know themselves when they have settled it—but it will certainly not be the one and indivisible Republic, if there is any force to be attached to probabilities. There is, it is true, very little to be attached to them in this country, where, since everything has happened, anything may happen; but I am mistaken if the provinces do not prove reactionary to an extent which will astonish and disgust the Republicans. The predominating consideration must be that the country absolutely requires repose to heal up the wounds that the war has made; and the Assembly will probably be glad to take the first ready-made system of Government that comes to hand—Prince and all—rather than venture upon the Republican tangle of systems. I speak of the immediate future; but, for all that, the French

are ingrained Republicans, and if a Prince is established, there will be more changes to come sooner or later.

Jan. 27.

The *Journal Officiel* has spoken, though only in general terms, and now we know officially that an armistice is being negotiated. The terms are not mentioned, but I believe I may be allowed to say that they are—

1. Duration of the armistice to be three weeks, with power of renewal.

2. All the forts to be occupied by the Prussians, who are, however, not to enter Paris.

3. The army, except the naval contingent and one division, to lay down its arms, and to retire into the boucle de la Marne (or Peninsula of St. Maur), and the Peninsula of Gennevilliers. The officers all to retain their arms.

4. The naval contingent, the one armed division, and the National Guard, retaining their arms, to garrison the interior of Paris, there to maintain order.

5. Paris to pay a war contribution to Prussia of two hundred millions of francs, or £8,000,000 sterling.

These conditions seem so far to be very favourable, and they mask the capitulation in a way which will make it almost palatable to the Parisians. The terms of definitive Peace have not, I understand, been discussed at all, but it is supposed that they will include from two hundred to three hundred millions sterling of indemnity, the razing of the fortresses, and, hardest of all, the cession of Alsace and part of Lorraine. If Prussia desires permanent peace, she will not insist upon the last condition, and all those Powers who desire to maintain the tranquillity of Europe will do well to use their influence in preventing the dismemberment of France. It appears that M. de Bismarck opened his conversation with Jules Favre by telling him that he had "come too late," and spoke of concluding a

Peace either with the Emperor, with the Empress as Regent, or with the Prince Napoleon—an idea which was entirely abandoned, however, when M. Favre reappeared on the morrow. An impression gains ground here that England has at last "intervened efficaciously," and I trust it may be true, for it will do more than many treaties of commerce to cement the alliance between the two countries. *Apropos* of the Treaty of Commerce, we may expect to have notice given of its termination, for France will have so much money to raise that she will be forced, for some years to come at least, to impose very heavy customs duties on all products entering her ports.

I rode out to Forts Vanves and Issy this morning, in order to see how they had come out of their bombardment. As I approached Vanves the ground was so thickly strewn with fragments of shells, that I could not walk my horse between them without touching them at every step. The trees were cut off short, and the ground ploughed up in every direction into long furrows and deep holes, marking the passage and the explosion of shells. The poor little fort seemed badly treated. The gateway is knocked entirely out of shape, and the top of the arch looks dangerously out of the perpendicular. As for the two barracks—tall stone buildings standing in the open space inside—they are utterly ruined, not a square foot on the Prussian side of them but is scored or breached by shell; and one of them had half its front carried clean away, leaving the flooring and walls inside visible like a huge honeycomb. In one of the rooms in these barracks I had passed many a pleasant hour, and I felt a pang at seeing it so demolished; for one as easily gains an affection for places one frequents as for men one knows well, whatever they be. I was pleased to find the commandant, Colonel Hauer, safe and sound in a casemate, and he gave me a terrible account of the twenty-

three days' bombardmemt. In the hottest days the fort received shells at the rate of 240 per hour, or 5700 in the twenty-four. Probably between fifty and sixty thousand have been thrown at it altogether, and yet the whole loss is but twenty killed and some eighty-odd wounded, a total which would have been much smaller but for two unlucky shells which went through two casemates and exploded among the men crowded inside. The cannon, however, suffered greatly. One huge piece I saw—a *pièce de trente de marine*, with a breech four feet in diameter—had been cut in two by a shell just as it was about to be fired. One of the elegant Louis XIV. pieces is also smashed, and several others are lying dismounted on the ramparts. The ramparts, however, have not been seriously damaged anywhere, and the fort is, indeed, for all military purposes, in a perfect state of defence, although the most exposed of all to the Prussian fire. I may mention that, although the suspension of arms was settled to take effect from twelve o'clock last night, the Prussian batteries continued to shell Vanves till three o'clock this morning, without their fire being of course returned, and even at eight o'clock this morning they fired some *balles de rempart* into it. Surely this is a monstrous proceeding.

At Fort Issy I found the barracks not only breached, but clean burnt out, with the roofs both gone, and the observatories alone standing upon black, skeleton-like walls. The wall of this fort has been smashed in one part to atoms, and lies in ruins in the ditch, but the inside holds good and stands as firm as ever, as does the parapet above, nor is there anything like a breach anywhere. Here, too, several guns have been dismounted, though not so many as at Vanves. I found the garrisons at both places by no means sorry that it is all over, but still much disgusted at the

idea of surrender under any form, and confident beyond measure in their forts, which they love as a sailor loves his ship. At Vanves some men were engaged in transferring stores of flour into carts to be carried into Paris, to add to its terribly slender store of provisions.

Jan. 29.

The text of what is called the Convention or, to use a more correct word, the capitulation of Paris, is published this morning, and the terms are as I stated them on the 27th, except that the garrison and army of operation are allowed to re-enter Paris, instead of being camped outside in the Marne loop and Gennevilliers—a concession which was made at the last moment by M. de Bismarck, who seems to have shown a readiness to come to terms of which M. Jules Favre has not perhaps made the most. They are declared, however, to be prisoners of war, which is enough of itself to show that the so-called armistice is in reality only a deferred surrender. Another additional article, drawn up when the main points had been settled, provides for the transmission to and from Paris of "open" letters to be sent through the Prussian head-quarters at Versailles.

With the Convention the Government publishes a statement as to the food remaining in Paris, from which it appears that there is bread to last till the 4th, or at most till the 8th of February, and meat (horse-meat only, of course) till the 3rd or the 5th. This will suffice to show that the resistance, so far as food is concerned, has been pushed to its farthest limit, for, as the Convention was only signed yesterday, there remains really but six days, or at most eight, to repair the railways, and to bring into Paris bread and meat enough to save the most needy from sheer starvation. So far the Government is entitled to credit for a certain amount of prudence which at one time it did

not seem likely to display; but if it has been wise in capitulating it has been most incredibly foolish in the manner of doing it. Thus the proclamation which yesterday morning announced that the Convention was finally settled, and on the point of being signed, contains two phrases to which no man with any pretension to be a statesman, or even a politician, ought to have put his name. "Paris a beaucoup souffert, mais la République "profitera de ses longues souffrances si noblement sup- "portées. Nous sortons de la lutte qui finit retrempés pour "la lutte à venir." The idea of presenting the Republic as a consolation for the sufferings and the fall of Paris is one which would just now be extravagant in the wildest burlesque; but it is surpassed in folly by the second phrase I have cited, which seems to have been purposely designed in order at once to irritate the Prussians at the moment when they have their foot on the neck of the country, and to maintain the country itself in an attitude of resistance, which is now no longer possible. The only charitable supposition as to those who framed and those who have accepted this insane talk is that the misfortunes of the country have turned their heads. The same might be said with regard to the article of the Convention which provides that the National Guard shall retain its arms, were there not a nearer explanation. The Parisian National Guard, with arms in its hands and thirty sous daily poured into its pockets, will, when the time comes for a final settlement of the affairs of the country, be one of the greatest dangers and difficulties possible, and he who proposes to take away the chassepots and to stop the flow of sous will have a hard time of it. Why, then, when the opportunity was ready-made, did not the Government accept with gratitude the chance of disarming them? They are the first who should have been made harmless, for although they have

never been a danger for the Prussians, they are capable of becoming a very great danger to their compatriots. But no. The remnant of the regular army, the sailors, and the Mobiles, who have come from their homes to defend Paris at the rate of five sous a-day, who for four long months have been fighting outside, who have slept in ditches, endured cold, wet, and hunger without a murmur, who have, in short, done more than their duty nobly, and who in doing it have lost *one-third of their number*—they are disarmed, while the National Guard, who have slept comfortably in their beds, with an occasional guard on the ramparts and thirty sous a-day, who have fought but once and have lost but one man in every 250, are to be petted to the last, and allowed to remain a standing danger for Paris, which is committed to their charge as though they had defended it! I am afraid this can only be an electoral manœuvre with a view to the coming Assembly, but it is a most suicidal one, and quite inexcusable if, as I am told, it was M. Jules Favre who insisted upon and carried the point in opposition to M. de Bismarck's opinion. One result the siege will have quite contrary to that which ought to have been obtained. It will widen immeasurably the breach that has so long existed between Paris and the provinces. The Mobiles hold that they have been sacrificed in order to defend a city whose citizens will not defend, or even help to defend, themselves, and the seeds of a great contempt and a great hatred have been sown which will bear bitter fruit for Paris. I could cite the most striking instances of this feeling. It has been greatly increased by the difference of treatment dealt out to the provincials who have come to defend Paris and to the Parisians themselves, and will be greatly aggravated by this last stroke of policy.

It may serve to show the worth of the National Guard

as soldiers if I mention what happened to me yesterday. I had gone out to Villejuif to breakfast with Colonel Lamandé, who commands, or rather who then did command, the artillery of the whole plateau. After breakfast we rode through the works, accompanied by an orderly. It was a melancholy spectacle to see the beaten and demoralised air of the men, and our conversation was sad enough with those we met. "Pour un rien," said General Pathurel, almost with tears in his eyes, "je ne brûlerais la cervelle." This, however, by way of parenthesis. On leaving the redoubt of the Moulin Saquet we rode down into the village of Vitry when, just as we were entering it, I heard the familiar "whew-ping" of a bullet close to me, and immediately after the rattle of it among some low bushes. We both started, and the colonel angrily called for an explanation. A peasant gave it at once. "It happens every day, my "colonel," said he; "it is the Garde Nationale that you see "there." At this the colonel naturally used some bad language, and it was excusable, for the ball had passed close behind and between us and the orderly. Any commentary beyond the colonel's bad language would be superfluous.

Jan. 30.

The Prussians marched yesterday morning into the forts, which had previously been evacuated by the French troops. It was all arranged and carried through in the most quiet and business-like manner, without ceremonial or parade of any kind; but the garrisons which have so well defended their forts were terribly cast down, and slunk rather than marched into Paris, with the air of men who fear to be seen. The streets are now full of soldiers without arms, who wander about in a melancholy manner, not knowing what to do with themselves, or stand absently about the sheds in which they are lodged.

There was some doubt this morning as to whether

Vanves had been occupied, and in order to ascertain I went out thither, accompanied by my friend Tissot, the artist, who desired to see the effects of the bombardment. Turning a corner near the fort, we found ourselves in the midst of a Bavarian post, who made no remark of any kind as we passed through them. After passing several more posts we arrived at the fort, at the gate of which was a group of officers and men, and, of course, two sentries, all Bavarians, clad in long great-coats and the ugliest helmets ever invented. We passed into the fort without any questions being asked, returning the salute with which the sentries were so polite as to offer us, and through the open space covered with soldiers up on to the ramparts. We had gone round them, and were about to come down, after a fruitless search for the big gun so neatly cut in two, when two large soldiers ran up with fixed bayonets, and intimated that we were to be marched off to the commandant. To the commandant, who was in the middle of a big piece of enviable bread, I explained that we simply desired to see the interior of the fort. He sternly declared that it was impossible without an order from his "chénéral," and ordered us to be escorted outside the lines immediately. This was at once done, with the aid of another fixed bayonet, and we made the best of our way back to Paris; not, however, without an interview with another Bavarian officer—a portly, comfortable gentleman, who took pains to point out the road to Versailles, thinking we were bound thither, and who seemed dumbfounded to learn that we had come out of Paris and into the lines without a "certificate."

A notice was posted up to-day that authorisation will be given to all applicants who, for sufficient reasons, wish to leave Paris, and to go through the Prussian lines. I am informed, however, that the railways will not run for

passengers for another week, and it will be very slow as well as very dangerous travelling by any other means. Paris is certainly a place to be out of just now. Living is as much a matter of difficulty as ever, and there is no excitement, nor is there likely to be any for the next three weeks.

Jan. 31.

I am assured that the Prussians are pillaging St. Cloud, and that since the Armistice they have been incessantly engaged in carrying off the furniture from the houses and sending it away laden on carts. Although this is told me by an eye-witness, who was at St. Cloud yesterday, I have much difficulty in believing it, for the Prussians have never yet pillaged the town, as they might have done with impunity any time these four months, and it is incredible that they should begin now that an armistice has been signed. Probably the acts described to me are those of isolated soldiers, but it is to be hoped that they will be put a stop to at once, as, no doubt, they will if the French Government takes due steps to that effect.

The railway from Paris to Versailles will probably be opened to-morrow, and the other lines are being actively repaired. It would appear, from an official note published this morning, that the supplies expected from England will have to be sent from Dieppe to Rouen, thence to Amiens, and so to Paris. This question of railways is the most interesting one of the moment, for everybody is anxious to get away, even if it is only for a time. There is, however, I imagine, no doubt that Peace must now soon ensue. France is utterly prostrate, and must submit to any terms, though if the terms imposed include the cession of Alsace and Lorraine I fear the Peace will only last long enough to enable her to bring an army together again with which to try another fall.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE END.

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Feb. 2.

PARIS is and will be for the next few days full of electioneering excitement, or what here answers to the term. Excitement in the sense of the broken heads and unbroken flow of speech which accompany any contest in England is unknown, but the walls are covered with placards issued by the various candidates for a seat in the peace-making Assembly about to be assembled. Committees, unions, and clubs are announced, and public meetings are held every evening, and every newspaper, big, little, "grave, gay, or "religious," publishes its list of candidates. Some of them even go so far as to impart their views on the constitution best suited to France, among others the *Univers*, in which M. Veuillot this morning elaborates a theory of Government which, for theoretical beauty of proportions and practical foolishness, might vie with any production of the Abbé Sieyes. Thus he declares that the Legislative Assembly should be based upon "universal suffrage," but adds thereto the provision that the Monarch ("Henry V., "King of the Frances") shall have the power of nominating as many extra members as he pleases, in order to provide for worthy men excluded by party or intrigue—an arrangement which is like saying that the drink of mankind shall be founded on brandy, but that the Teetotal Society may put as much water as they like into it. The

systems current, however, are nothing compared with the candidates. Among others there is M. Gagne, the half-witted creature whose pranks have already so often amused the Parisians, and who now proposes that the Emperor William shall be proclaimed "head and arch-pacificator of "Europe." There is, too, a naval captain, who simply observes that France requires a man of genius, and passing plainly to the declaration that he is the man of genius, completes the syllogism by claiming to be elected as a right due not less to himself than to the country. And there is Eugène Pay, the inventor of the theory that the world is to be regenerated by gymnastics, and the proprietor of the "grand gymnase," connected in my mind with many tiring hours of flying trapeze and other lofty tumbling, and frequented by a collection of decrepit creatures, who think to remake their digestions by tiring their muscles.

When I say that it is by no means positively certain that the above-mentioned gentlemen will not be elected among the forty-three representatives of the Department of the Seine, you will have some notion of the utter disorganisation existing in the ideas of the electors. They have in reality no idea whatever as to the kind of men they require for the work to be done, still less as to the men who are of the kind required, and they will probably end by returning chiefly admirals, generals, and journalists, or, in other words, the first to hand of the names that have been most before them during the past five months. The provinces are likely to have much clearer notions upon the matter, and it is they who will furnish any backbone the Assembly may have; but the provinces will vote under all kinds of unfavourable conditions. The flower of their men are in the various armies scattered about France, which will weaken enormously the expression of their opinions, and

diminish in an equal degree their power of control in the Assembly.

There is, however, I imagine, little doubt that, whatever happens, the 758 arbiters of the fate of France to be assembled in the theatre of Bordeaux will seek with one accord to bring about Peace as soon as possible. The terms of Prussia have not yet been distinctly stated, as indeed they could not be, but there is no doubt that they will be substantially the same as those sketched out at the Ferrières interview—the cession of Alsace and a part of Lorraine, and a war indemnity of a sum as yet undetermined, but probably to be calculated at a rate per day. There may and probably will be found men desperate enough to counsel a continuance of the struggle, but in reality there is nothing left for France but to submit to the conditions imposed, and to set about the work of the reorganisation of the country as soon as may be. If the two eastern provinces are indeed torn away, the war must certainly break out again before many years are past, and the French are now, for perhaps the first time in their history, so entirely out of conceit with themselves that they will probably set to work very much in earnest to recast the systems and theories which have been fatal to them. As for the army, there is as good material as any in the world to be found here, and when properly handled the results are wonderful, as the experience of the naval contingent shows. But there has been the most utter disorganisation in all the military departments, so that, while the generals have always been eager to do the work of soldiers, the soldiers have assumed to do that of generals. There have thus been formed traditions which it would have taken generations of ordinary times to eradicate; but which this war has suddenly exploded altogether. Under the teaching of it, and as a second or third-rate Power, France

may do in five years what it would else have taken fifty to accomplish.

The losses of the garrison during the siege have been very heavy. I am told that, out of about 50,000 regular troops and sailors and 90,000 Mobiles, or in all 140,000 men, who have constituted the active army that has manned the forts, furnished the outposts, and done all the fighting, a total of no less than 80,000 killed, wounded, prisoners, and sick were *hors de combat* at the end of the siege, while of the 250,000 National Guards there were perhaps three or four thousand in similar case. The naval officers have, perhaps, been the greatest sufferers. Thus, out of 130 who have taken part in the siege eighteen have been killed and twenty-two wounded, a total of forty in all, or nearly one-third put *hors de combat,* without counting the sick. The prisoners taken by the Prussians must amount to some thousands, but the garrison has only made 942 in all, and these have now been sent back to be exchanged.

Feb. 3.

This morning I rode out early to Versailles, which is just now much farther than usual from Paris, in consequence of the bridge of Sèvres being cut, and the necessity therefrom arising of going round either by Courbevoie or by Issy. Wishing to see St. Cloud, I chose the former route, which, passing as it does for a considerable distance by the Seine and through the park, is what would be called in ordinary times a very pleasant ride, but now a very melancholy one for any but a Prussian convinced up to the hilt that this is a "just and necessary" war. On the farther side of the bridge at Neuilly was the first line of Prussian sentries—Landwehr of the Guard, who had their hands full with a compact crowd of peasants and *voyous* pressing against them to get through into the country in

search of provisions to sell, and of plunder to appropriate. The sentries kept them back with fierce oaths, furious gesticulations, and murderous menaces, but still with perfect good humour, as it was easy to see; and although they pretended now and then to prod a very audacious offender with their bayonets, they were careful to do no harm. Very rigorous were they, however, about passes. They took mine into five minutes' grave consideration before they allowed me to pass; but when once its validity was established, they paved a way for me in an instant, and gave me a flood of information in strange German as to getting my pass *viséd*—all which I took in with much attention. I did not avail myself of it, however, as I reckoned upon getting all necessary formalities fulfilled at Versailles, and accordingly at once took the road by the riverside, under the Mont Valérien, on which was floating the tricolour of the German Empire, looking in the distance like a French flag hoisted sideways.

The road was lined with sentries, who looked curiously at me, but made no remarks, and every mile or so I came upon a group of mounted officers—fine big-bearded men, on good-looking horses, which contrasted, as I felt, but too well with the half-starved screw that has carried me during the siege. All the bridges are cut, of course, and no steps have as yet been taken towards repairing any of them, not even that at Sèvres, although it would shorten the distance between Paris and Versailles by nearly one-half. I was curious to see St. Cloud, as it was reported to be utterly demolished, and I found, indeed, that that part of it which lies on the hill, just above the bridge, was in complete ruins. The side walls of the houses were standing for the most part, but the whole of the interiors, with the roofs, had fallen down between them into great heaps of charred timber and calcined stones, which lay upon the hill like a

series of valleys of desolation. The most strange relics had escaped in places. One wall on the third story still bore a frame with billiard cues ranged upon it, and in the corner the little washing basin, with a clean towel folded on its edge. Another house had disappeared all but its first-floor balcony, which still stretched uninjured across the empty space; while a third had fallen down, and left across its summit a board bearing, in gigantic letters, the words, "Hôtel et Restaurant, dîners à toute heure"—literally in this case a hollow mockery. All this was the work of fire, and of fire arising from French shells, but the greater part of the houses had escaped uninjured, and seemed not to have been so much as touched for purposes of pillage.

Resuming now the road by the river under the trees—I passed by Bréteuil and the batteries which I had a few days previously watched with caution from the opposite side of the river—I came upon a post, the officer of which *viséd* my laisser-passer, and took the opportunity to assure me that all the German army were wishing and hoping for Peace, and by no means desired to enter Paris. The groups of soldiers now became more frequent, until on entering Sèvres they became one unbroken stream, flowing in and out of the town. Sèvres is scarcely scratched either by shot or shell, and the inhabitants seemed to be quite at home with the Prussians, and to be living in harmony, and in many instances in community, with them.

At the entry to Versailles I was requested to get my laisser-passer countersigned at the military office, and to take notice that I must not remain more than three days in the town, all which I steadfastly promised to observe. Then came the great event of the day, in the shape of the first good meal I had eaten for four long months. It may perhaps not greatly interest readers to know that I revelled

in an omelette, a *sole au vin blanc*, and a *Chateaubriand;* but if they knew the delight it afforded me after living for three months on bread and jam, and above all, if I could convey to them the astonished and admiring tones of the successive "ohs" with which my enumeration of the dishes was subsequently received in a Parisian club, they would appreciate the importance of the affair. After breakfast I went through the château, and found everything in perfect order, and absolutely untouched by profane hands; then wandered deliciously through the park, which, with its solitude and its grand old trees bathed in a soft grey light, seemed to carry one far out of the humiliating present, backwards to the time of the Grand Monarque. The town itself seems to have accepted, if not adopted, the enemy, and I observed in a tailor's shop-window a choice assortment of new Prussian uniforms suited to all arms and sizes. Here, as in Paris, funerals are frequent, but while in Paris we have got so *blasés* even upon death that the soldier's bier now goes generally unaccompanied to its resting-place, here the meanest German is honoured with a numerous following of comrades and the solemn strains of a mournful hymn. Reflections upon life and death brought me to the market, where I corrected my train of thought by buying some partridges, with which I straightway rode off back to Paris again.

At the bridge of Neuilly I found the crowd greater even than it had been in the morning, and it was with much difficulty that I managed to squeeze through. Just in front of me there passed a cart laden with sacks of potatoes, and it was immediately surrounded by a mob of ruffianly-looking fellows of the lowest Parisian type, who demanded with cries to buy a portion of its contents. The peasant-proprietor whipped his horse into a trot, but they followed at a run, hanging on behind and shouting louder than

ever. At length one of them stopped the horse, and in the twinkling of an eye the rest precipitated themselves upon the cart, and fell upon its contents, ripping open the sacks of potatoes and seizing them. Seeing this, I spurred up to the rescue, worked my horse in among them, and laid about me pretty freely with the butt-end of my hunting-whip, while the proprietor, encouraged by the reinforcement, did the same with his stick. Between us we sent some dozen of them yelling away. They immediately began to pick up stones, but I shouted to the peasant to whip his horse, and we got him into a gallop, which soon put an interval between us and the assailants, whom I continued to menace and to objurgate as I covered the retreat. The scoundrels followed for a distance and shied one or two stones after us, but they were too cowardly to follow seriously, and we got clear with our potatoes, leaving them probably to begin their proceedings afresh upon another object.

At Versailles I saw Mr. Odo Russell, who appears to have his hands full of his duties. The conditions of Peace to be proposed by Prussia are not yet made public, nor can they be until the Assembly is got together. They have, however, been communicated to M. Jules Favre, and it is understood that they do not greatly vary from those hinted at during the Ferrières interview, except that the war indemnity will have been increased in amount. The cession of Alsace and part of Lorraine is still the chief feature insisted upon.

I learn that it is possible Mr. Wodehouse and some other members of the British Embassy are to return to Paris now that their presence is no longer necessary. Probably this step will be followed by the dismissal of Mr. Blount from the British Consulship, and the reinstallation of the gentleman who has been away from his post during the only time

when he was likely to be of any use or to have any real work to do, or any other risk to run than that of receiving fees.

Feb. 5.

I breakfasted this morning with "Monsieur Ernest," as M. Picard is affectionately called by his friends, and found him in a state of mingled indignation and stupefaction at Gambetta's incredible proclamation. The Ministers are, however, determined to uphold their authority, and they have already sent off the dismissal of Gambetta, whose place is conferred upon M. Jules Simon, a mild and conciliatory man, likely to set things right again in a short time. The proclamation has produced naturally a very evil effect upon the Prussians, who have suddenly become as obstructive in all matters as they formerly were helpful. M. Rampont, *directeur des postes*, tells me that when he went yesterday to Versailles to complete the postal convention which had already been agreed upon, he found himself "no longer in "the presence of the same people," and nothing but the fact that the German functionary had given his word to that effect procured the signature of the convention, but even then in a much less favourable form than had been expected. The Prussians have now also begun to raise difficulties in the way of the revictualling, or at least they will not afford any facilities they can withhold for effecting it, and they have even stopped some trains on the Orleans line when they had arrived quite close to Paris.

This question of revictualling is a vital one in the present state of affairs. The pinch has not yet come; there are no cases of starvation; the rations have, indeed, even been increased in certain quarters, and Paris can live upon itself till the 8th or the 9th. But if the flow of provisions into the city is stopped now, starvation must ensue very soon after those days; and it is to be hoped that, now that the

Prussians are practically in possesion of the capital, they will not let it starve because Gambetta chooses to issue an insensate proclamation. There is food enough on the way to preserve Paris from that, and roads enough to bring it, if it is only allowed to come; and it only depends upon the Prussians to allow or to disallow its arrival. I repeat that at present there is no want, and that, on the contrary, the supply of food is greater in quantity, and far better in quality (including, as it does, fresh meat, butter, eggs, and fish in considerable supplies), than it has been any time these last three months.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PARIS TO LONDON.

LONDON, *Feb.* 8.

"LONDON to Paris in eight hours," I repeated to myself, in memory of better times, as last Sunday morning I sallied forth upon the boulevards. I was, indeed, bent upon a desperate attempt to get anywhere out of Paris in any number of hours, but the accounts of the well-informed seemed to offer but slender hope of anything like success. "You must first get a laisser-passer," said they all with one accord, "then go to Gonesse by carriage, then "take the train, and then God knows what will happen to "you." The facts that there were no horses and no carriages, or none known to exist in Paris, and that Gonesse was from fifteen to eighteen miles off, struck me as discouraging; but it seemed hard to believe that, if provisions could come into Paris, I could not get out of it, and accordingly I had my luggage packed up, including three beautiful shells, each as thick as, and rather larger than, a modern man's hat, and set forth upon my attempt.

To obtain a laisser-passer seemed, from the official announcement on the subject in the *Journal Officiel*, to be the simplest and prettiest thing in the world. You were to write a letter to the Prefect of Police, stating your name, age, and domicile, and the object of your journey, and the answer would be sent to you in twenty-four hours. I had tried the proceeding rather from curiosity than from

any confidence in the result, and, although a week had elapsed, I had received no communication whatever in reply. Moreover, I knew that there were very good reasons why. Seventy thousand confiding Parisians, burning to leave their so-long-beleaguered city, to revel in the delights of family life and the flesh-pots of countries still blessed with beef and butter, had fallen at once upon the Prefect with their requests for laisser-passer, and the Prefect had naturally not been equal to the task. The candidates for the Assembly had been promised peculiar facilities for obtaining passes, and it is a striking proof of the eagerness of Frenchmen to serve their country that while there are only 758 members in all to be elected, no less than 20,000 candidates appeared in Paris alone, and all of them for the most distant departments. The Pas de Calais was an especial favourite, and I apprehend the electors will be sorely puzzled if they have to choose between the hosts of Parisians who have obtained passes in order to offer themselves to their suffrages. Meaning seriously to leave Paris, I abandoned all thought of the Prefect of Police, and addressed myself to a Government functionary with whom I was acquainted. "A laisser-passer?—hem—very rare and difficult to get; but if you really want to go," and with this he opened a drawer, "I'll fill up one for you, if you'll promise not to be a candidate; I'm too tired of them."

The laisser-passer obtained, there arose the question of getting to Gonesse. All the morning I sought uselessly, but at last I found a proprietor of carriages, connected by some occult horsey ties with the man with whom I had kept my screw during the siege, who said he could lend me a vehicle to take me to Gonesse—certainly, but it would cost me 120fr.; and he could only let it on condition that I undertook to pay 7000fr. in case it got captured by

the Prussians, or lost anyhow on the journey. This seemed to me to be what the French call "roide"; for, although I was ready to be responsible for the vehicle while I was in it, it seemed to me absurd to engage for its safety after I had left it as he wished. I mentally resolved upon another plan—agreed to hire the carriage for the day only, and sent it to my lodgings with instructions to take my luggage, which was ready packed, so determined was I to leave. That done, I posted off to another Government functionary; and setting forth the distance of Gonesse, the impossibility of getting a conveyance to it, and the absolute necessity for my departure, I sprang upon him the suggestion that there must be a train from Paris itself. This drew forth the admission that there was indeed one which was starting at that very minute, but that, he declared, was the only one that day, and probably for several days, and it took no passengers. I at once saw that I was saved, and, after much struggling, I induced my friend, who objected mainly on the score of the manifest inutility of the step, to give me an authorisation to depart from Paris in any train that was going. Armed with this I set off at once to the Northern Railway, and, after much parley, discovered that there was a second train leaving at half-past four o'clock, and obtained a *visé* to my authorisation permitting me to leave in it without luggage. It wanted half an hour to the time, and I was just able to reach the goods station at La Chapelle, and to place myself comfortably in a compartment of the one carriage added to a long train of empty trucks for the accommodation of two other privileged persons and myself. I also smuggled some luggage in, and sent the rest (including my three shells) back to my lodgings. At half-past four punctually we steamed slowly out of the station, and in a few minutes came upon the first helmeted sentries and the Prussian

territory, which extends nearly the whole length of the line. An hour took us to Gonesse, where there was a compact crowd of men (no women among them, naturally) waiting for a train with that patience which Frenchmen only can show. Some of them had been there for thirty-six hours already, and they looked wistfully at us as we steamed out of the station. Slower and slower we went, and at last stopped altogether at Chantilly at nine o'clock. Here our privileged carriage was unhooked altogether from the train, which went on some 500 yards, leaving us on the rails in solitude and the lively expectation of being run into by the next train that might arrive from Paris. This situation was not pleasant from whatever point of view it was regarded, and we banded ourselves together and sought the stationmaster, a stout German, who only wanted the air of the "Little wee dog" to make him an old acquaintance. This functionary, girt with an immense sabre, and puffing leisurely his pipe, gazed at us with much stolidity, heard our tale, and, in answer to our question when we should go on, said he didn't know, but we had better go to the Hotel d'Angleterre and sleep there till the morning. That would not do at all, however, for we had sworn a solemn oath not to desert our carriage, and we asked him if we could not at least remain in it. "Ach si fous foulez," replied he carelessly, and we went back to combine a fresh effort. It occurred to us to push our carriage on and to hook it to the train again. As we were about to do this the stationmaster suddenly appeared, as if out of the earth, so that we had to ask his permission to effect the manœuvre. "Si fous foulez," was his answer for the second time, and we put our shoulders to the carriage and rolled it along, while he looked on stolidly through puffs of smoke. This done, we resumed

our seats, and in about an hour further we had the delight of feeling ourselves once more in movement. After jolting along slowly for some time we came to the bridge over the Somme, beyond Creil. The bridge of ordinary times, which is at a high level above the river, and in three large stone arches, was blown up most completely—so completely that only the two shore piers of it remain—on the enemy's advance by the French five months ago. The Prussians have, however, replaced it by a low wooden bridge, and have hewn out of the solid rock, which here forms the shore, a long-inclined cutting, in which the rails are laid down to the lower level, making a sharp curve which joins the ordinary line again on the other side. We got safely over, and, after much more slow jolting, arrived at Amiens at five o'clock in the morning, just twelve hours and a half after leaving Paris. The German railway functionaries were, as usual, invisible, though the station was covered with helmeted sentries; but at last we found a friendly Frenchman, an old servant of the company retained by the Prussians, who assured us that the train would go no further towards the north, and that if we wished to reach Boulogne or Calais, we must take a carriage to Abbeville, thirty miles distant. I shouldered my luggage, and we took our way to an hotel, where we knocked up a waiter, who at first declared he could not receive us, the hotel being "requisitioned" for Prussian officers, but who finally installed us in the *salle-à-manger*, and produced a chicken, wherewith we effected a somewhat late dinner. This over, we set out in quest of a carriage, and, after two hours' search, managed to unearth a strange vehicle, half waggon and half phaeton, the proprietor of which agreed to take us the distance for 50fr. At eight o'clock we were under weigh, and, following the road which runs through the valley of the Somme, close by the river the whole way,

we again resumed our joltings in a greatly aggravated form. Along the road we came upon several columns of Prussian infantry on the march, and at the little village of Hengest we overtook the advanced guard, which was just installing itself, and walking about the streets with the day's ration of salt herring in its hands. Here our horse showed signs, not only of giving up his journey—he had done that all the way—but of falling upon his nose, so we hunted up a peasant who volunteered to complete the journey for us. In half an hour we resumed it in his cart, and at half-past two arrived at Abbeville, just as the Prussians were coming into it from the other side. The station was still entirely in French hands, and a train was in it ready to start. Into this we got, and by eight o'clock were at Calais, where our troubles ceased with the sight of the English mail steamer. We arrived in London at twenty-one minutes past seven, having been only thirty-eight hours on the journey.

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